

Section 3

GOOD PRACTICE

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RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARISH/BENEFICE

The Parochial Church Council holds responsibility for its children's work. It is recommended where possible that it should establish a Responsible Caring Group.

N.B. Small Parishes and Parishes held in plurality may find it more helpful to contribute members to a RCG covering a wider area.

Each parish should:

- Accept the prime duty of care placed upon the incumbent and Parochial Church Council (PCC) to ensure the well-being of children and young people in the church community.
- Adopt and implement a child protection policy and procedures, accepting as a minimum the House of Bishops' Policy on Child Protection but informed by additional diocesan procedures and recommended good practice whilst being responsive to local parish requirements (for a sample policy, see appendix CP1 in section 5).
- The Child Protection Officer is available to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures. The co-ordinator must ensure that any concerns about a child or the behaviour of an adult are appropriately reported both to the statutory agencies and to the Diocesan Child Protection Officer (see section 2). Ideally the co-ordinator should be someone without other pastoral responsibility for children in the parish.
- Appoint a person, who may be different from the co-ordinator, to be a children's advocate; this should be someone whom children know they could talk to about any problems, if they so wish. (See page 5).
- Display the Childline telephone number: 08001111.
- Ensure that all those authorized to work with children and young people or in a position of authority are appropriately appointed, trained and supported, and provide all authorized personnel with a copy of the parish child protection policy, procedures and good practice guidelines.
- Adopt a Parish CRB Policy and incorporate it into the appointment procedures (see section 4).
- From October 2009 Volunteers working with children, young people will have to be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority.
- Pay particular attention to children with special needs and those from ethnic minorities to ensure their full integration and protection within the church community.

- Create a culture of informed vigilance which takes children seriously.
- Ensure that appropriate pastoral care is available for those adults who have disclosed that they have been abused as children.
- Provide, as appropriate, support for all parents and families in the congregation, being aware particularly of parents whose children have suffered abuse.
- Ensure that those who may pose a threat to children and young people are effectively managed and monitored.
- Ensure that appropriate health and safety policies and procedures are in place.
- Provide appropriate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Review the implementation of the child protection policy, procedures and good practice, at least annually.
- Rural parishes or parishes held in plurality may wish to join together to implement the policy and procedures. It should be noted, however, that people working in isolated situations can be vulnerable and care should be taken to implement the policy in full.
- Local ecumenical projects should agree which denomination's child protection policy to follow and this decision should be ratified by the bishop and other appropriate church leaders.

A parish checklist can be found at the end of this section.

CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY

Advocacy for Children is important. There is a tendency for children to be disbelieved in the face of adult power and control and it is essential that those working with children should be ready to hear, believe and where necessary act on their confidences. Children often find it difficult to speak of events which have upset them and it is most likely, therefore, that they will unburden themselves to those they already know well and trust.

All those working with children should be prepared to take on the advocacy role. It is strongly recommended that all those working with children in a parish should be alerted to the possibility that a child may wish to share a confidence and that they should be prepared to act appropriately. On receiving a confidence the worker should always discuss the implications with a member of the parish Responsible Caring Group, the Diocesan Child Protection Officer or another responsible person. Advice, support and training should be available from within the parish (the Responsible Caring Group), local members of the congregation working in relevant professions (Health Visiting, Teaching, Social Work, etc) or from the Diocesan Children's Adviser, Youth Adviser or Child Protection Officer.

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

Parishes are encouraged to copy this list for all children's and youth workers. It may also be a useful discussion subject for a training session.

- Familiarise yourself with your Church Child Protection Guidelines and the Good Practice Guidance and know what to do if you are worried about a child or young person.
- Welcome each child and treat each individual with dignity and respect.
- Be sure that each child has a completed health and consent form.
- Always work in twos: you should never be more than a few seconds and an open door from another authorised leader.
- Plan activities that are appropriate and inclusive.
- Before you criticise a child's behaviour, consider what might be happening in other parts of their life which may be causing it.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour e.g. bullying, ridiculing, rejection and mockery. Never use abusive language or behaviour yourself.
- Respect personal privacy.
- Be aware and alert. Take seriously what you see, hear or feel. If you are concerned, talk to someone you trust; seek advice from an appropriate source.
- Know where to find the telephone number of your Child Protection Officer.
- Remember that you are responsible for your actions, and that the child's welfare is paramount.
- Remember your role as Children's Advocate and be ready to listen to a child sensitively.
- Undertake a Health and Safety check of the rooms to be used for activities.

N.B. Risk Assessment form for away from base and outdoor activities (CP14) can be found in Appendix section 5.

STATEMENT FROM ECCLESIASTICAL INSURANCE

The groups concerned with this document will be insured through a number of different companies whose policies will be subject to various terms, conditions and exceptions. However, the majority of PCCs, parish groups, etc. will be insured with Ecclesiastical who have made the following statement in respect of those policies they have issued for:

- a. Churches in use for worship;
- b. Youth Groups, through the Diocesan Youth Group Scheme.

Under such policies public liability (third party) insurance, where in force, will operate to protect the interests of the insured where they are found to be legally liable for accidental death of or bodily injury to a third party or accidental loss of or damage to third party property, subject to the policy terms, conditions and exceptions.

The policy will provide an indemnity to the insured if they are held legally liable for an incident leading to accidental bodily injury or illness as a result of abuse.

It is not Ecclesiastical's intention to provide an indemnity to the perpetrator of an incident of abuse

This statement clearly only applies to policies issued by Ecclesiastical. Where parishes are insured with another company, the position of that company should be clarified.

Policies of insurance require the insured to take all reasonable steps to prevent injury, loss or damage occurring. Failure to take such precautions may prejudice the insurance arrangements in force. A duty therefore exists upon the insured to research and adopt best practice based on current and ongoing guidelines.

It is also a condition of a policy of insurance that any incident or allegation is notified to the insurer *immediately*. Failure to comply with this requirement may prejudice any cover provided by the policy.

Public liability insurance indemnity limits should be kept under regular review. Guidance is available from Ecclesiastical.

N.B. For particular adventure activities, youth leaders are advised to check with the Diocesan Youth Advisers about what activities are covered.

June 2008

Extract from Protecting All God's Children

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Good Health and Safety practice is an essential element in a parish's Child Protection work. Buildings which are old or in poor repair can pose a significant hazard to children who are in the Church's care. More children are harmed through poor Health and Safety practice than by the activities of abusers.

Points to be aware of:

- Children should meet in a safe location, which means that all precautions should be taken to minimise risk.
- Care should be taken where there are heating appliances, low level sockets, windows and doors.
- Ideally there should be no stacked furniture in a room where younger children meet (up to 12 years). However, if this is unavoidable, chairs should be no more than five high and with their backs to the wall. **On no account should children of any age be allowed to climb on stacks of chairs.** Table stacks should be stable.
- There should always be a first aid kit available (not locked away!), the PCC should designate someone to maintain it. It is good practice to ensure that a qualified First-Aider is present during group activities. Training can be obtained at nil or low cost from the Red Cross or St John's Ambulance Service.
- Suitable disposable gloves for dealing with cuts, broken skin and other bodily fluids should be provided.
- All leaders should know the location of the nearest telephone.
- Names, addresses and particular health needs of all children at Church sponsored events whose parents are not also present must be kept.
- Accidents should be recorded in an Incident Book and parents notified immediately.
- Cleaning materials and all poisonous substances (including rat and other rodent control substances) should be kept out of the reach of children and locked away. Cleaning staff must be made aware of children's use of the building and health and safety considerations.
- There should be an agreed procedure for a fire drill drawn up by a PCC designated person, in consultation with the Fire Service.
- Young children should not leave the premises unsupervised.
- External entrances and pathways should be well lit.

N.B. Leaders should not give medication to children themselves. They may remind children when it is time for them to take medication.

Children and young people should be encouraged to be aware of Health and Safety issues and to take part in work on the issue when appropriate.

Risk Assessment should be up to date and kept in a central Location.

Other implications for Health and Safety are included in the following Health and Safety Checklist.

It is suggested that this list be laminated and given to leaders of children's work for use before every session.

DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE
A HEALTH & SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR
THE CHURCH'S WORK WITH CHILDREN

Area	Issue	Remedy
Entrance and Exit	Are the doors to the outside world secure?	Ensure small children cannot wander off in the building or out of it Consider whether the fitting of a child-proof barrier is necessary
	Does the building exit on to a safe area or a road?	Ensure an adult is at the door when children leave and that children who need to be accompanied leave with an adult
Stairs	Are stairs safe for small children? Wooden or stone? Can they fall down them?	Ensure small children are accompanied down stairs. Consider fitting a stair gate.
Heating	What type of heating? Could a child burn themselves if they fell against it?	Ensure heating has guard where necessary
Cooking and kettles	Is there child access to cooker, boiling kettle etc?	Ensure children do not have access to cooking unless in supervised activity Never boil a kettle at child level Ensure wires cannot be tripped or pulled over
Electrics	Can children access electrical installations and sockets?	Ensure safety plugs are in sockets Ensure electrics are boxed and/or inaccessible
Furniture	How child friendly is the furniture? - metal corners/edges; old wooden objects which could splinter?	Remove or make inaccessible child unfriendly furniture. Fit corner cushions if necessary.
	Have furniture and other objects been coated with lead based paint?	Remove lead paint.
Stacked chairs	Are chairs stacking variety?	Ensure stacks of chairs are safe and children have no access. Children should <u>never</u> be allowed to climb on stacked chairs.
Cleaning materials and poisons	Are cleaning materials, bleach etc accessible to an inquisitive child?	Ensure cleaning materials etc are in locked and inaccessible cupboard. Ensure cleaner(s) are aware of risks to small children of leaving materials out.

<p>Craft materials</p> <p>Rat poison or pest control</p>	<p>Glue, tippex, large markers are potentially noxious</p> <p>Writing materials not fitted with child-proof caps?</p> <p>Are poisonous pest controls used?</p>	<p>Ensure craft materials are put/locked away when not in use.</p> <p>Get child-proof caps.</p> <p>Ensure poison is put down in places inaccessible to children.</p> <p>Ensure those who put down the poison are aware of children's use of building.</p> <p>Ensure leaders are also aware of poison.</p>
<p>Toilets</p> <p>General cleanliness</p>	<p>Are toilets sanitary?</p> <p>Can a child lock themselves in the toilet?</p> <p>How is the floor? How dirty will a small child get if s/he crawls?</p> <p>Is the floor covering adequate for crawling?</p>	<p>Ensure toilets are clean</p> <p>Warnings of wet floors put out</p> <p>Ensure toilet doors can be unlocked from the outside.</p> <p>Ensure floor covering is appropriate to age group and activity.</p> <p>Check for loose carpet tiles, frayed carpet etc.</p>
<p>Fire</p>	<p>Are Fire Exits known and unlocked?</p> <p>Are Fire Exits locked when building is not in use?</p>	<p>Ensure all adults know Fire Exit routes and that Fire Exit doors are unlocked.</p> <p>Ensure Fire Exits are unlocked and/or that keys are identified and accessible</p>
<p>Access by strangers/ others</p>	<p>Can people from the outside world access the building?</p>	<p>Ensure entrances which are not Fire Exits are locked.</p> <p>Ensure that if children go to unsupervised parts of the building, they are accompanied</p>
<p>Cupboards/ Storage</p>	<p>Could things fall out of a cupboard onto a child?</p>	<p>Ensure cupboards are filled safely.</p> <p>Should cupboard locks/ fasteners be fitted?</p>
<p>Carbon Monoxide Fire & Smoke</p>	<p>If gas used is there a Carbon Monoxide detector?</p>	<p>Fit Carbon Monoxide detectors</p> <p>Fit smoke detectors</p>
<p>Registration/ medical needs</p>	<p>A register of children attending (and the responsibility of the Leaders) MUST be kept. Is it?</p>	<p>Keep Register which allows all children to be traced in the event of Fire or Accident. This will include parent Name and Address/Telephone for easy contact.</p>

Medical	<p>Are there children who have special needs by reason of health or disability? Medical needs must be covered. Is there a First Aid Box?</p> <p>Is there a First Aider?</p>	<p>Leaders need to be aware of special needs</p> <p>The First Aid Box needs to be checked regularly for contents</p> <p>A First Aider needs to be present or easily accessible.</p>
Accidents	<p>Do you have accidents?</p> <p>Do you keep an Accident Book?</p>	<p>In the event of incidents or accidents the keeping of an Accident Book enables identification of causes and remedy if appropriate. Accident Book should be easily available and on show if possible</p>
Plants	<p>If plants are in the building are they poisonous?</p>	<p>Some common and decorative plants are poisonous. Ensure they are not accessible to children. Preferably remove them</p>

These guidelines are intended to assist leaders to make decisions, not to take that responsibility away from them.

SAFE PEOPLE

- You can reduce the likely situations for abuse of children and help to protect your leaders and volunteers from false accusations by making sure that everyone is aware that it **doesn't make sense to:**
 - **spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.**
 - **take children alone on car journeys, however short.** In an emergency ask the child to sit in the back seat. Seat belts must be worn. Check that insurance covers the vehicle and passengers.
 - **take children to your home.** Never invite a child or young person to your home alone. If you invite a group ensure that someone else is in the house. Make sure the parents are aware of the situation and have given their consent
- Leaders and volunteers should **never:**
 - engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
 - allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
 - allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
 - make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child even in fun;
 - ignore allegations a child makes, or fail to make a record;
 - do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves;
- It may sometimes be necessary for leaders or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or are children with disabilities. 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.

In such situations it is important that all leaders are sensitive to the child and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

- There should always be at least 2 workers with any group of children.
- Leaders should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support, which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.

- Colleagues should be prepared to speak to another worker, or their supervisor, if they see them acting in a way, which may be misconstrued or places them in a vulnerable position. If having done this the same happens again it is important that the person responsible for appointing leaders is contacted.

TAKING CARE OF TOUCHING

GUIDELINES ON TOUCH FOR THOSE WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN

- Keep everything in public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to a child's needs.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the adult.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or could be construed as, sexually stimulating to the adult or child.
- Children are entitled to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances, i.e. when they need medical attention.
- We should all take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to constructively challenge a colleague if necessary.

BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES – WHERE DO YOU DRAW THE LINE?

	<u>PHYSICAL</u>	<u>SEXUAL</u>	<u>EMOTIONAL</u>
BEHAVIOUR FALLING WITHIN PERMITTED LIMITS	Physical restraint, within permitted limits in circumstances where it is necessary for the protection or the safety of others.	There can be no permissible behaviour which either implicitly or explicitly has sexual connotations.	Children should always be treated with dignity, respect and positive regard. However, occasional admonition or criticism may be permissible.
INAPPROPRIATE OR UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR	Verbal abuse and/or threatening words or behaviour. Excessive use of force in control and restraint situations.	Lack of proper regard for privacy. Suggestive remarks, jokes, etc. Physical contact which, although not overtly sexual, makes the child feel uncomfortable.	Persistent admonition, direct insults, severe criticism, shaming and embarrassing behaviour. The persistent use of scorn and ridicule.
ABUSIVE OR POTENTIALLY ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR	Persistently inappropriate behaviour of the type referred to above. Deliberately assaultive behaviour (corporal punishment or other assaultive behaviour which results in a persisting bruise or laceration would almost certainly constitute prima facie evidence of a criminal offence).	Persistently inappropriate behaviour of the type referred to above. Any overtly sexual contact. (This latter category would almost certainly constitute a criminal offence).	Gross examples of the above, and including persistent and sexist/racist behaviours or language.

GOOD PRACTICE IN LEADING GROUPS

- Always keep a register of who is present at any event or regular activity.
- Ensure that Parents'/Guardians' contact details and the children's health and consent forms are kept up to date(see appendix section 5).
- Explicit permission from parents/guardians must be obtained for all outdoor activities (see appendix CP8).
- Some 'adventure' activities need to be licensed. Advice is available from 'Adventure Activities Licensing Authority', 17 Lambourne Crescent, Llanishen, Cardiff, CF4 566. Tel No. 01222 755715
- Any physical contact, which should only take place in public, should reflect the child's needs, not the adult's and should be appropriate to the age and understanding of the child and generally be initiated by the child rather than the adult.
- A child should never be hit or shaken or in any way physically disciplined. We recommend that leaders have an agreed policy on standards of behaviour and an agreed code of discipline.
- Casual visitors i.e. those who have not been authorised by the Church, should not have access to children without the presence of an adult who is deemed to be responsible for the group.
- A Risk Assessment of all activities should be undertaken.

Staffing Ratios

There should always be a minimum of 2 adults with any group of children or young people.

Wherever possible it would be desirable to have leaders of both genders.

It is recommended that at least the following number of authorised leaders is present at each session. This is only a minimum and should be adjusted according to the activity, the building and the ability of the children.

Taking into account that there should be a minimum of 2 leaders in each group, the following age ratios should be observed.

Age	No of leaders	No of Children
0-2year olds	1	3
2-3year olds	1	4
3-5 year olds	1	8
5-8 year olds	1	8
Over 8 year olds	1 for the first 8 then 1 for each additional 12 children.	

Older Children and Young People

In deciding on the number of leaders, consideration should be given to the nature of the activity, where it is taking place, the children themselves – how well they are known, etc. There should always be not less than two adults and an appropriate gender balance.

We recommend that the wider the age range, the greater the number of leaders.
N.B. Anyone under 18 years old cannot be included in staff ratios and should not be solely in charge of a group.

Hygiene

It is recommended there should be at least one toilet and wash basin per ten children. Only leaders of the same sex should accompany small children to the toilet. Casual visitors should never accompany children to the toilet.

Insurance

It is vital that insurance cover for all activities is checked annually.

Be aware that some insurance is not valid if activities have not been officially approved by the PCC.

ALWAYS check your insurance covers you for any special event.

'Policies of insurance require the insured to take all reasonable steps to prevent injury, loss or damage occurring. Failure to take such precautions may prejudice the insurance arrangements in force.' (*Ecclesiastical Insurance Group*)

N.B. see statement by Ecclesiastical Insurance in the introduction section 1.

ACTIVITIES WHICH INCLUDE UNDER EIGHTS

You must inform OFSTED if events arranged by the parish involve all of the following:

- include under eights;
- do not have parents present;
- last for more than two hours in any one day.

OFSTED needs to know the location, the number and age range of children expected, the number of 'staff', the hours of opening and the reason for this 'occasional' or 'day care facility'. They may not insist on registration, as long as they are kept informed, and they do have the 'right to inspect'.

Ofsted Website address: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Sample Letter

OFSTED
Royal Exchange Buildings
St. Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

Dear Sir/Madam

As advised by our Diocesan Child Protection Guidelines I am writing to inform you that we are planning an event which will include children under the age of eight years for more than two hours.

Below are the details of this event, which I understand might be classed as an 'occasional facility',

Date, Location and Hours of Opening

The event is called [*name of event*] and will be held on [*day, month, year*] at [*location*]. It will begin at [*start time*] and finish by [*finishing time*].

The Reason for this 'day care facility'

Our aim is to [*state aim of day*]. The programme will include a variety of workshops and activities, for [*state age group*].

The Number and Age Range of Children

We expect [*number of participants and age group*]. We are providing a crèche for very young children.

Number of 'Staff' [*Say what ratio of adults to children you expect*]

We abide by our diocesan child protection guidelines: leaders work according to appropriate staffing ratios and all are 'authorised' through CRB and parish child protection procedures.

Thank you for your attention

Name:

Position

SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES FOR HOME-BASED YOUTH GROUPS

Underlying Principles and values

The following are reproduced from the Church of England 'Equipping': training for youth work. They apply equally to work within a home-based or cell group structure.

When working with young people there are ethical principles and values which underpin the work. The following are based on those found in 'Ethical Conduct in Youth Work' (N.Y.A. 2000) and 'Youth Work Values' (DES 2003). They reflect not only the Christian roots of youth work, but also the respect which Christians should have for others.

Ethical Principles

All those engaged, as workers with young people, on behalf of the Church of England, should have a commitment to:

- treat, value and respect young people, avoiding negative discrimination;
- respect and promote young people's rights to make their own decisions and choices, unless the welfare or legitimate interests of themselves or others are seriously threatened;
- contribute to the promotion of social justice for young people.

Responsibilities of those who work with young people

There should be a commitment to:

- provide ongoing opportunities for their own spiritual and faith development;
- recognise the boundaries between the personal and 'professional' life and be aware of the need to balance a caring and supportive relationship with young people with professional distance;
- recognise the need to be accountable to young people, their parents or guardians, colleagues, the P.C.C. or equivalent;
- develop and maintain the required skills and competence to do the job;
- strive for conditions where these principles are discussed, evaluated and upheld.

Values for working with young people

There should be recognition that:

- young people choose to be involved;
- there needs to be an understanding of where young people are with their spirituality and view of the world and their interests.

The ethical and professional principles and set of values imply the worker will demonstrate a clear understanding of, and commitment to, equality of opportunity and the importance of choice, freedom, responsibility and justice as well as spiritual development. This should be rooted in a Christian ethos that encourages young people to begin to achieve their God-given potential.

Workers should seek to work with other agencies, including diocesan staff, which, contribute to young people's social, personal and spiritual development.

These principles also imply that those who work on behalf of the Church of England will actively continue their own Christian journey and understanding of the Anglican Church.

Good working practice

It is important that all home-based groups operating within the auspices of the Diocese of Newcastle are attached to, or have a supporting parent body, with a recognised governing structure and able to supervise the group leaders/convenors. It is recognised that the youth cell movement is a vibrant and growing area of the church, and is one of the key fresh expressions of church. It is important that this area of work is helped to flourish, and that initiatives such as these are also well-supported and able to protect those involved in these groups. Given that the members are both children in the eyes of the law, but approaching young adulthood with the increasing independence of this stage of development, a balance has to be maintained between protection and encouraging that development.

However, there are good safeguarding principles that have to be maintained, and the paramountcy principle, the principle that the welfare of the child is paramount, has to be upheld.

These Guidelines have been compiled in an attempt to assist those in this area of work to maintain the balance.

1. Home-based youth groups should have a clearly stated parent body, for example, a school or a parish, and the group should use that body's Safeguarding (child protection) Policy.

2. Recruitment for group leadership should be done carefully, with particular attention given to a job description and person specification. Home-based youth groups should have an adult leader who is the responsible person for the keeping of records and ensuring that safeguarding guidelines are adhered to.

The issue of staffing ratios is probably the most contentious issue area in safeguarding young people in home-based youth groups. All current child protection advice says that two adults, properly recruited and checked, should be present for each group.

3. When the group is in planning the issue of insurance cover should be checked with the parent body's provider and additional cover provided if necessary.

4. Registers, contact details and parental consent for attendance and group activities should be kept as with any area of children's work.

5. The person responsible for safeguarding in the parent body, whether incumbent, churchwarden, child protection representative/officer, or teacher responsible for safeguarding, should be informed about the group and be able to include it in their usual monitoring, including the report to the P.C.C. or Governing Body.

6. The provision of host premises is an area for careful consideration. Home-based youth groups on school or church premises are responsible to those bodies, and those bodies have a duty of care to the group. Cell groups also meet in host family homes. Where this is approved by the school/P.C.C./other governing body, written consent from the hosts should be obtained. Adults acting as hosts should be expected to complete the same recruitment process as any other group leader. In these circumstances, the parent host could act as the second adult for staffing ratio purposes, provided that an "open door" policy is adopted. The parent hosts should be given a copy of the relevant Safeguarding (child protection) Policy and expected to adhere to it. At least one parent host should remain on the premises during a meeting and if unable to do so must inform the adult leader so that a second authorised adult can be present.

7. Home-based youth groups are likely to organize activities outside the host premises. These may well be similar activities to those taking place in the members' other social networks, but it should be made clear to parents/carers of the nature, time and cost of the activity, including transport arrangements and with a contact telephone number for emergencies. Where group activities are outside the normal social activities, such as street cleanups, direct action etc. a risk assessment should be carried out by the adult leader/convenor of the activity and that risk assessment, along with the consent form, should be given to parents.

8. Careful attention should be given to the issue of transport provision, and particularly that of newly qualified drivers. It would be sensible to have a discussion with parents of group members on the issue of giving lifts, and for everyone to be clear about the risks, both in terms of accidents and of the potential grooming of group members. Where group members are under 16, the guidelines in the Diocesan Policy should apply.

9. Supervision of group leaders is essential and should be offered regularly: this should involve, on at least an annual basis, a discussion with the child protection representative of the parent body.

CHILDREN AND PERFORMANCE

Children who are performing in shows e.g. pantomimes, may need to obtain a 'licensed'.

The need for licensing depends on the number of performances and the times of the performances. The Local Education Authority has the discretion to exempt groups from the need to obtain licences.

For further information contact your local Education Welfare Service well in advance of the performance to get their advice. This will ensure that, if you do need to obtain licences, any procedure can be carried out with the minimum of stress!

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO OF CHILDREN

There is currently legitimate concern over the photographing and videoing of children because of the risk of misuse in child pornography – which is in itself, child abuse.

All LEAs give guidance to schools. Reference may be made to the Diocesan Child Protection Officer or the Diocesan Director of Education at Church House if further information is needed.

The Church has to tread a narrow and sensitive line between being

1. Over cautious on the one hand and preventing families from keeping a record of children's activities – which are an important part of a child's growing up and history and
2. Running the risk of giving material to those who would misuse it.

There are some simple principles which should be followed.

- No one outside the immediate family should take photos of individual children without parent/carers' consent. Anyone found to be doing this should be stopped immediately and where possible the film confiscated.
- Photos/videos of e.g. an outing or a play performance may be taken for publicity or historical purposes by those organising the event. These should not be published (either on a notice board or in a magazine etc) without parental consent. (Sample Consent form appendix section 5)
- There should be an understanding, made explicit if necessary, that photos and videos being taken are for family use only. If there is any doubt a written declaration should be obtained (see example below).
- No photos/videos should be published (e.g. in church magazines) which identify individual children without specific parental consent (see example below). If this is withheld this should be treated with understanding and honoured. No attempt

should be made to persuade parents to change their minds. If one or more parents object to their child's name being used then the photo(s) should be published with no names and a generic description.

- Children who do not wish to be photographed have the right to refuse.
- Consent should be requested from parents prior to the outing where photographs might be taken.
- Normally pictures of individual children will not be taken for publication. Avoid images that only show a single child with no surrounding context of what they are doing.
- Care should be taken to ensure children are appropriately dressed.
- Particular sensitivity should be exercised over children who are vulnerable. Parents/carers will decide whether a child is vulnerable or not and where necessary, their judgement should be sought.
- Still photographs shown on displays and video clips available during events should depict children in an appropriate way. They should not display images of children in inappropriate or revealing clothing so that appropriate levels of integrity and decency are maintained. Do not use photographs or images likely to cause embarrassment.
- Use photographs that represent the diversity of the young people participating.

The application of sensitivity and common sense is paramount.

If in doubt consult the Diocesan Child Protection Officer or the Diocesan Education Officers at Church House.

The Youth Advisers have used the following wording for consent:

'Photographs will be taken by the organisers during the weekend/event. By granting permission for your child to attend this event, you are also giving your consent for the organisers to store electronically or by other means images of your child. These images will be stored securely by the Diocese of Newcastle and may be used for promotional/marketing purposes. If any images are used, names will not identify the young people concerned.'

INTERNET AND MOBILE PHONE SAFETY

Introduction

Most churches now have or use computers and benefit from the many opportunities offered by the internet. Many young people have mobile phones which can be very useful to them and their parents/carers. However, you should be aware of the potential dangers offered by this new technology and take appropriate precautions.

There are dangers if

- your computer can be accessed by children, and/or
- you run your own website, and/or
- you use e-mail, chat rooms or text messaging to communicate with children

What to do if your computer is accessible to children

A connection to the internet means that a child could be in touch with harmful material. It is estimated that there are millions of abusive images of children on the net. Adequate internet child protection is essential to make sure that the children using your computer cannot access any harmful material. The following guidelines should be followed.

Guidelines

- Consider fitting a locking device and/or using passwords to prevent unauthorised use (you may also wish to install anti-theft devices).
- Use filtering software which governs whether certain sites can be accessed. Some software packages such as Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Netscape's Communicator will filter out content not rated by the Internet Content Rating System (ICRA).
- Encourage all potential internet users and their parents/carers to agree and sign a contract (see 6 below).
- Ensure that potential users complete an internet consent form, including parental permission (see appendix CP 12, CP13).

(You can, of course, also help parents to set up browser software at home so that the children who come to your church are safe there too. Some Internet Service Providers (ISPs), for example America on Line (AOL), have parental controls to ensure that only appropriate web sites are visited. There are also a number of pieces of software which will allow for this such as Netnanny, Cyberpatrol and Surfwatch.)

Publishing indecent material is a criminal offence. If you do come across any, you must report it immediately to the police. See References in section 6 for statutes.

What to do if you run your own website

If you have your own website you should get it rated with the Internet Content Rating System (ICRA).

If you are using photographs of children on the site, follow these guidelines:

- get the permission of the parent/carer in writing before taking or using any photographs, using the form (see 7 below);
- use group photographs rather than photographs of individuals. Ensure that people are suitably clothed;
- do not give any identifying details eg names. This information could be used by an abusive adult to gain an introduction to the child. Keep the caption to the photos on a general level.

E-mail, chat rooms, text messaging, Blogging

These are the means of communication of choice for most young people and church leaders and youth workers are increasingly likely to use them. You need to bear in mind the following points:

- **e-mail:** youth workers should ensure that any communication they have with young people is always public, not private. If workers are sending e-mails to young people eg to remind them of future youth meetings, ensure that the church leaders are aware you are communicating with young people via e-mail and that the parents/carers are happy with this. The content should be “public”. Ideally send group e-mails rather than individual e-mails;
- **text messages** are private by nature so take care when you use this medium. Save messages as text files to ensure an open record exists. Churches should have agreed ways of using Instant Messaging Services (IMS);
- **chat rooms:** again you need to be aware of the dangers, especially if you are communicating with young people through them. Again keep everything public. Keep to public areas in chat rooms and only use moderated chat rooms. Questions to ask:
 - is the chat room moderated?
 - who are the moderators?
 - has the chat room got a clear terms and conditions policy?

Does it

- have advertising or external links?
- give young people genuine opportunities for students to interact and shape the chat?
- have appropriate access control and password verification? Can anyone join?
- remind users about safety issues?

(Written by Childnet International for the Department for Education and Employment, March 2001)

Blog Safety: MySpace, Beebo or Piczo are all examples of blogging and social networking sites. Young people can often put too much personal information on these sites. Childnet has produced 5 key SMART rules which remind young people to be SMART on line.

Leaflets on blog safety can be obtained from the Child Protection Officer, or from Childnet.

Advice for children and young people

You should ensure that this advice is seen by the children you come into contact with

Personal information

- Never tell anyone you meet on the internet your home address, your telephone number or any other identifying information eg church name or youth group name, unless your parent/carer gives you permission. Be careful if ever a web site asks you to type in your name and address in order to receive anything.
- Never send anyone your picture, credit card or bank details, or anything else, without first checking with your parent/carer.
- Never give you password to ANYONE! (even your best friend).
- Always be yourself and do not pretend to be anyone or anything you are not.
- always remember: - if someone makes you an offer that seems too good to be true, it probably is. Be careful if you are offered any gifts while online, they could contain harmful material such as pornography or viruses.
- Never arrange to meet anyone in person without first agreeing it with your parent/carer or children's/youth leader and get them to come along to the first meeting, which should always be in a public place.

- Agree to a contract with your parent/carer or with your children's/youth leader on the use of the internet eg length of time on the net, sites which you intend to visit, behaviour whilst online, etc.

Chat Rooms

- Never stay in a chat room or conference if someone says or writes something which makes you feel uncomfortable or worried and always report your concerns to your parent/carer or children's/youth leader.
- Check that any chat room you enter is regulated and run by a reputable company or organisation which monitors activity.
- Remember that Chat Rooms are "public places" and that you may not know the true identity of anyone you meet in a chat room.

E-mails

- Never respond to nasty, suggestive or rude e-mails or postings in Usenet Groups.
- When receiving e-mails delete attachments from strangers without opening them, they may contain viruses that can damage your computer. Make sure you know where files are from before you download them. They may also have viruses.
- Chain letters are forbidden on the internet. Inform your parents/carers who can then notify your ISP if you receive one.

See Appendix Section 5 (CP12) for Young Person's Contract: Staying Safe Online

DATA PROTECTION ACT

The Data Protection Act 1998 has substantial implications for the Church of England, which affect every parish. The Act came into effect on 1st. March 2000.

The Act is designed to protect the rights of identifiable living individuals concerning information held about them.

The following information should be sufficient to enable most parishes to comply with the Act.

Definitions

Personal Data: Information relating to a living individual, including expressions of opinion about that person.

Structured Filing System: A set of information about individuals which is structured either by direct reference to those individuals (e.g. by name) or by criteria which makes material relating to any individual readily available.

Processing: This is widely defined to include almost anything you might do with data, including simply holding it on file.

Data subject: An individual who is the subject of personal data.

Data controller: A person who (alone or jointly) decides the purpose for which and the manner in which personal data is processed.

Main implications of the Data Protection Act

- Protection is extended beyond computer-based records to cover personal data held in paper based structured filing systems.
- A framework (known as 'notification') has been laid down for data controllers to register with the Data Protection Commissioner's office.
- A new category of 'sensitive personal data' has been introduced. This includes material relating to religious affiliation (i.e. most of what is likely to be held by church workers) and it requires particularly careful handling.
- Data subjects have the right to know what is held about them by the Data Controller.
- The Act sets out principles for the handling of data. It must be;
 1. Processed fairly and lawfully.
 2. Processed only for a specific purpose.
 3. Adequate, relevant and not excessive for the purpose for which it is held.
 4. Accurate and up to date.

5. Kept for not longer than is necessary.
6. Processed in accordance with the extended subject rights given by the Act.
7. Kept securely.
8. Not transferred to any country which does not offer adequate data protection.

Action required

Churches and ministers who hold information about identifiable living persons which can be processed automatically or in paper based form are required by law to register with the Data Protection Register. (While there are some clearly defined exemptions, this should not be taken to mean that such exemptions are likely to apply to church users.)

Further information can be obtained from the Diocesan Secretary.

MINIBUS SAFETY CHECKLIST

The PCC should make sure the Minibus Safety Checklist is consulted and implemented before any journeys take place.

Do not drive a minibus anywhere unless your driving licence entitles you to do so.

You must be at least 21 years old (unless you hold a PCV licence). Drivers who have passed their test for the first time **before** 1 January 1997 may drive passenger vehicles in categories B and D1 on their licence. The D1 entitlement has not for hire or reward restrictions shown by numbers '1' or '101'.

Category B covers vehicles with up to 8 passenger seats such as saloon cars and people carriers. Category D1 (category restriction 1 or 101) covers vehicles with 9 to 16 passenger seats. If a vehicle with more than 8 passenger seats is used for hire or reward a car licence holder may only drive it within the terms of a permit scheme.

Drivers who have passed their test since 1st January 1997 (when the rules changed) are restricted to category B with a maximum tonnage of 3.5 tonnes.

They must pass a PCV test and meet medical requirements to drive larger vehicles.

There is one concession; volunteers may drive minibuses with up to 16 passenger seats in the UK if all the following conditions are met:

1. The vehicle is used for social purposes by a non commercial body; and
2. The driver is aged 21 or over; and
3. The driver has held a car licence for at least two years; and
4. The driver provides his/her services on a purely voluntary basis; and
5. The vehicles maximum gross weight does not exceed 3.5 tonnes excluding any specialist equipment up to 750kg used for carrying disabled passengers.
6. No trailer is being towed

Beware that some minibuses are now heavier than 3.5 tonnes mgw.

Section 19 permits are a creation of UK law and are not valid in Europe *where different rules apply*.

There are two types:

Small bus permits: these cover vehicles with 9-16 passengers.

Large bus permits: these cover vehicles with 17 or more passengers.

Section 19 permits allow certain organisations to use a passenger vehicle for hire or reward without an O-licence (standard international) and a minibus for hire or reward without a PCV licensed driver. They must not be open to the general public and must not make a profit. But drivers must meet the age requirement and be insured.

Section 19 permits are normally granted to specific groups for use by that group and affiliated umbrella organisations. The church comes into this category e.g. the vehicle may be used by the Youth Group, the Choir, the Sunday School and the Mothers' Union.

There are also new rules about drivers' hours: Please consult the minibus handbook before driving.

Details of types of licences you require are available from the Community Transport Association, Highbank, Holton Street, Hyde, Cheshire, SK14 2NY.
Send an A4 sae

Further Considerations

- You are satisfied that adequate insurance cover has been arranged for both driver, passengers and the vehicle.
- You are sure that the minibus you will be driving is completely safe and checked with all of its documentation up to date. If in doubt, refuse to drive.
- The minibus has forward facing passenger seats, and is fitted with three point diagonal seat belts throughout. **Please note that all road safety experts and organisations advise that buses with sideways facing crew seats should not be used.** They are only intended as utility vehicles designed for small scale ferrying of people around, for example, building sites. They are not intended for motorway and long distance driving. In addition, lap only seatbelts are not recommended.
- You have a list of the names and addresses of all those you are transporting on your person during the trip and also left behind with another responsible person. Such details should normally include parental consent forms, etc.
- The minibus is appropriate for the user group. Do not wrestle wheelchairs into a vehicle with no proper lift or spacing. There should be one seat for every passenger.
- You have a route plan and have informed someone at home of this and the likely times of your arrival at points on route and your destination.
- All luggage is firmly secured preferably on a roof rack if not in a trailer. There needs to be ample space between the rear of the bus and the passengers.
- Driving times and hours are reasonable and there is a qualified co-driver for journeys of a total of six hours or more.
- You have checked that the minibus complies with the statutory requirement to have an approved fire extinguisher and a first aid kit on board at all times.

- The bus is covered by AA, RAC, Greenflag or some other comprehensive recovery service.
- You have access to a mobile phone on the journey.
- You are accompanied on the journey by another adult colleague who, ideally, is licensed to drive a minibus. Attention should also be paid to appropriate gender mix.

CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS

Unfortunately current experience has shown that churches can inadvertently attract unwanted responsibility and cost if care is not taken over the letting of church halls to outside organisations. This responsibility can take two forms:

1. Anything which takes place on Church premises is assumed to be 'all right'. We have an aura of safety and authenticity around us, both to those inside and those outside the Church. We need to be very careful that this trust is not abused or undermined.
2. In these days of 'no win; no fee' litigation people who feel themselves either to have been wronged or to have an opportunity to make some easy money will often sue. Even if an organisation using a hall is nothing to do with the Church, the Church may find itself sued if it is deemed likely to have more money (and therefore a greater pay out) than the organisation using the hall. Alternatively both organisations may be sued. The Church therefore has to make it absolutely clear that it has no responsibility for the letting organisation's activities. **It is should be noted that this does not take away the Church's responsibility for ensuring that its premises are actually safe.**

The following points should be born in mind in order to avoid liability:

- There should be a written agreement between the PCC/Trustees and the Hirer, setting out the terms of business (appendix CP16 section 5).
- The PCC should check that its basic insurance is up to date and whether it would be prudent to include additional cover for items such as hirer's public liability and loss of revenue. While larger organisations e.g. Scouts will have their own public liability insurance, not all organisations will and if damage occurs by those groups the fact that the PCC has public liability insurance will formally prevent an insurance company from taking steps to recover the cost from the hirers of any damage which may occur - a useful point when letting to more disparate groups.
- The PCC/Trustees should decide a level of fees for hiring the church hall.
- The PCC should ensure that any person signing a hiring agreement is over the age of 18.
- It should be made clear to the hirer whether the PCC holds any licences for the property and the hirer's responsibility to obtain any others that may be necessary for the event they are to hold.
- The PCC should consider whether it should seek a deposit which would be retained as compensation if the event were cancelled at short notice or to cover any damage that might occur.

- The PCC should oblige the hirer to comply with fire and other safety regulations and point these out specifically to the hirer.
- The PCC should consider compliance with food, health and hygiene regulations.
- The PCC will be responsible for the regular testing of portable electrical appliances belonging to the hall.
- The PCC should retain the right to refuse or terminate a booking.
-
- If the Hall is to be used for one day sales on an occasional basis the PCC/Trustees should contact the local Trading Standards Department to see if there is a code of practice for such sales.
- The PCC should bear in mind the charitable nature of the trusts on which it holds the hall and ensure that the hall continues to be available for community rather than commercial use.
- The PCC should check the requirements of the licenses for the sale or provision of alcohol.
- Safety of children: the PCC should ensure that the hirer will comply with the relevant provisions of the 1989 Children Act and any conditions required by Social Services and furthermore that only fit and proper persons will have access to children. Organisations which work with under 18s should have its own child protection policy and implement it.
- The PCC should ensure that no breach of gaming or betting laws are contemplated
- The PCC might wish to consider items such as storage, cleaning and security and nuisance e.g. litter on the premises.

The 'model' form (appendix 15) seeks to cover relevant matters. In particular:

- The statement on insurance should ensure that any costs accruing to the letting organisation can be covered independent of the Church.
- The Child Protection statement should ensure that an organisation working with children is taking proper steps to safeguard them both in its practice and in its recruitment of leaders.
- Food Hygiene is now a significant issue. The statement on this should ensure that should food poisoning occur, the responsibility will lie with the parent body! Food Inspectors may visit without warning and, again, this statement should ensure that organisations take responsibility for their own activities. *(If the hall does not have catering facilities this can be excluded.)*

Please note that this letting form is aimed at organisations, not individuals. In the case of a private party, it is deemed that parents of children attending are passing parental responsibility to the hosts. In the same way those attending an adult private party will assume their hosts will not poison them!

N.B. The attached hall hire form and vonditions of use are examples only and will need to be modified for local use. The hire form is targeted at organisations and will need modifying if used for an individual's hire of the hall.

A cautionary tale A church in Gateshead has had to pay out £4,000 to the family of a child who mildly burned his hand on a church hall radiator. The Church was sued rather than the (independent) Parent & Toddler Group which the child was attending which was deemed to have less money. Of course, in any case, the church hall Trustees/PCC should have ensured the radiators were properly protected.....

PARISH CHECK LIST

Item	✓ or X	Action
Do we have a Parish CP Policy?		
Do we have a Responsible Caring Group?		
Have we got available an up to date copy of the Diocesan Child Protection Guidelines?		
Is information displayed about the RCG and Child Protection advisors contact number?		
When did the RCG last meet?		
At the last Parish AGM was there a CP Report?		
Are all activities for children and young people authorised by the PCC?		
Are all children and young people's workers authorised by the PCC?		
Have all leaders and volunteers completed application forms, declarations and CRB Disclosures and have references been obtained?		
Are all confidential documents safely stored?		

Have all new workers and volunteers been through the Induction process?		
Have Volunteers been trained in relevant issues, including children's Advocacy?		
Are all leaders aware of their responsibilities as children's Advocates?		
Have leaders and volunteers renewed their CRB Disclosures and personal information forms where appropriate?		
Do we have an up to date record of those who have completed CRB checks?		
Are there correct ratios of leaders and genders to the numbers in each activity?		
Are children with special needs and/or those of different ethnicity or background made welcome?		
Is there a qualified First Aider at each activity or easily accessed?		
Is First Aid equipment easily accessed?		
Have we checked in the past year if leaders and volunteers have any training needs?		

* For individual church actions points