

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Guidelines

**Catholic Parish of Hampshire Downs
(including St Peter's - Winchester, St Stephen's - Oliver's Battery,
St Gregory's - Alresford, and St Thomas More's - Stockbridge)**

Introduction

These guidelines are about protecting the safety and welfare of the children, young people and vulnerable adults of this parish, and the adults and young adults who undertake to work with them.

These guidelines have been drawn from the Nolan Report (2001) and have been approved by the Parish Pastoral Council.

They seek to set out, in straightforward and unambiguous ways, how to deal with concerns about the safety and well being of children, young people, and vulnerable adults and how to react safely and sensitively if a child, young person, or vulnerable adult chooses to confide in a parishioner that she/he has been abused.

The guidelines also recommend procedures to protect adults and young adults who so generously give of their time to work with the children and young people of this parish. These include thinking and acting carefully about taking risks, and about situations, which could lead to difficulties, embarrassment, accusations and temptation. Finally, there are points that are helpful in terms of caring for children and vulnerable adults responsibly within the church groups and organisations.

**Catholic Parish of Hampshire Downs
(including Winchester, Alresford and Stockbridge)**

Policy Statement

It is the responsibility of the Parish Priest, Parish clergy, Parish Safeguarding Representative, Safeguarding Team, the Parish Pastoral Council and all working in whatever capacity with the children, young people and vulnerable adults of the parish of Hampshire Downs, to safeguard their welfare.

It is the responsibility of the Parish Priest, Parish Clergy, Parish Safeguarding Representative, the Parish Safeguarding Team and the Parish Pastoral Council of the parish of Hampshire Downs to safeguard the welfare of the adults and young adults who work with the children, young people, and vulnerable adults of the parish.

It is the duty of paid and voluntary workers to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults with whom they come into contact in the course of their daily lives, and particularly so when they are engaged in working with children, young people and vulnerable adults in recognised Church or Parish activities.

St Peter's Safeguarding Team for children and Vulnerable Adults

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Declaration of children's rights

God has given you the right to be cared for
by people you can trust.

God gives you the right not to be hurt in your
body or mind by grown-ups.

Never believe somebody who tells you a secret
you must not tell your parents*.

Never believe somebody
who says it is your fault
that you are being hurt or frightened.

God has given you the right to have your feelings
taken seriously.

If a grown-up does not take you seriously or
believe you, you must talk to someone else.

If you are uncertain about something
a grown-up tells you to do,
ask your parents or teachers about it.

** The term 'parents' includes guardians/carers and those with positions of responsibility*

Guidelines for Action

Child Abuse: How to recognise it and what to do

What is Child Abuse?

Abuse occurs when adults hurt children or young people under the age of 18, either physically or in some other way. Usually the adult is someone the child or young person knows well, such as a parent, relative or friend of the family. There are four main kinds of abuse.

Physical abuse - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causes ill health in a child whom they are looking after. 'Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy' commonly describes this situation.

Emotional abuse - 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 in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse - involves forcing or enticing a child or young person 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 (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect - the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive. It may involve the parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic educational or emotional needs.

Whatever the reasons, abuse is always wrong and it is never the child's or young person's fault.

Talking with Children

If a child starts to talk to you about the abuse, neglect, or mistreatment they are suffering:

- * listen calmly and reassuringly;
- * let the child freely recall what is important to him/her
- * do not ask any direct questions;
- * do not put words into the child's mouth
- * do not give the child the impression you do not believe him/her;
- * remember, you may well be the first person the child has ever spoken to about this. Whether you believe him/her or not isn't the issue; if you have any suspicion report it!
- * do not promise confidentiality.

Make a note of the discussion, when and where it happened, who was present and what the child said.

All this information will be useful if the child is later interviewed by the Police or Children's Services.

In whatever you do, always remember that **THE WELFARE OF THE CHILD IS PARAMOUNT.**

A checklist of good practice for workers/leaders working with children and young people

Staffing Ratios

For safety reasons, it is recommended that at least the following number of volunteers is present at each session. There should be a minimum of two volunteers and ratios adjusted according to the activity or the building and the ability of the children.

Staffing Ratios:

Age group	Staff	Children
under 5yrs	1 for every	3
under 8yrs	1 for every	6
8-11yrs	1 for every	10-15
over 11yrs	1 for every	15-20

- Anyone under 18 years of age cannot be included in staff ratios, and should not be solely in charge of a group.
- It is also recommended to have volunteers of both genders if working with a mixed group. If any of the group members come from a minority community, it is ideal if the adult team includes a member of that community.

Where possible ensure that a worker is not alone with a child, but be realistic in acknowledging circumstances with this might be necessary or helpful. Where confidentiality is important and a young person needs to speak to an adult on their own, ensure that others know the interview is taking place.

Boundaries

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

- The levels of personal care - e.g.: toileting must be appropriate and related to the age of the child whilst also accepting that some children have special needs.
- Physical contact between adults and children can be quite healthy providing it reflects the child's needs and is primarily safe for the child.
- Leaders/Volunteers need to think and act sensibly to avoid situations that could lead to difficulties or embarrassment or accusation.
- Leader/volunteers must ensure that the children and young people feel equally valued. Favouritism, real or inferred, caused feelings of alienation and can be misconstrued.
- Workers should not take children out on their own and refrain from forming personal relationships exclusively with the child.
- Two adults (at least one of whom should be the same gender as the child) should always accompany any child being driven in any vehicle. Common sense needs to be taken into account here.
- Conversation and behaviour should be friendly but not over familiar. Young people and children are more comfortable with an adult in role than with the adult who seeks to be 'one of the gang'. Responsible and appropriate use of authority provides stability and security.
- Workers should treat all children/young people with dignity and respect in attitude, language use, and actions.
- Respect the privacy of children and young people, avoid questionable activities, eg: rough/sexually provocative games and comments.
- Make sure that the only people allowed into a children's activity are the workers assigned to that group. You should not allow others to have free access unless they are there for a specific reason eg: guest speaker, maintenance person.

Guidelines on physical contact

Any physical contact should only take place in public

Physical contact should reflect the child's needs, not the worker's.

Physical contact should be age appropriate, and generally initiated by the child rather than the adult.

Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult, or the child.

Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances, when they need medical attention.

Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by pointing out anything that could be misunderstood.

If a worker persists in inappropriate touching of a young person, this must be challenged. If there are concerns about an adult's contact with a young person, advice must be sought.

Recorded information/log books

- A register of up to date information needs to be kept of the names and addresses of the children; telephone numbers; and any special needs; permission to be on the basis of 'loco parentis'. The information held on individual children and young people should only be available on a 'need to know' basis and otherwise kept confidential.
- Parental agreement should be sought regarding the arrangement for setting down and collecting children and young people. It is essential that no young person is left unsupervised either prior to, or at the end of a group activity.
- Keep a log book of each activity, a register of children and young people attending, the names of adults running the activity, a record of any unusual events, or incidences, eg: a fight, inappropriate behaviour. Records of previous examples of this behaviour will enable any allegation to be seen in context. Logbooks can protect both children and workers. Any incident should be recorded immediately and given to the safeguarding representative to be kept in a locked cabinet. A record should also be kept of anyone visiting vulnerable people in their homes, hospital or residential settings.
- Any accidents or injuries should be recorded in an accident book. Parents should be informed of any accidents and the circumstances and asked to sign the accident book.

Accusations of an abuse may be made many years later, so records should be kept as long as possible. Insurance Companies advise that records should be kept indefinitely.

Health and Safety

- All premises should have a properly equipped first aid kit. Its contents should be stored in a waterproof container, and the Parish Safeguarding Representative or Member of the Parish Safeguarding Team should regularly check contents. Workers should be encouraged to attend first aid training courses.
- Leaders, volunteers, young people and children should be aware of where the nearest telephone is for emergencies. Useful telephone numbers and help lines should be easily accessible.
- All participants must know where the fire extinguishers, fire alarms, and emergency exits are. All individuals should be familiar with fire regulations, and emergency procedures.
- If a group is away from the normal meeting place, it is important that there are arrangements for contact to be made, if necessary. A Risk assessment should be made prior to the trip and permission slips must be completed.
- Guidelines must be followed regarding photographs, visual images etc
- Fixtures, fittings and equipment, internal or external, should meet adequate safety standards.
- Drivers must carry a full driving licence, and have valid insurance. It is essential that seat belt rules, requirements for minibuses etc are complied with.
- Drivers of minibuses must have received training.

Remember

Give guidance and support to inexperienced helpers.

Careful planning is invaluable.

Clarify and agree objectives.

Consider risks and safety factors.

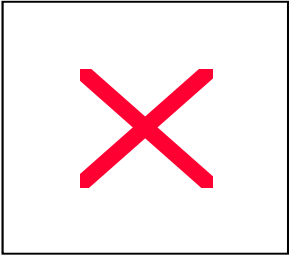
Identify and provide for special needs.

Responsibilities

of Parish Priest Parish Clergy. the Parish Safeguarding Representative the Parish Safeguarding Team and the Parish Pastoral Council

The Parish Priest, Parish Clergy, the Parish Safeguarding Representative, Parish Safeguarding Team and the Parish Pastoral Council should ensure the following:

1. That all volunteers have completed the necessary personal details and declaration forms; that necessary references are taken up for all new volunteers. This will include a check with the Criminal Records Bureau.
2. That all leaders/workers know what to do in the case of suspected or alleged abuse.
3. That there is adequate insurance cover, especially for activities away from the normal meeting place.
4. That premises used are safe and well maintained.
5. That there is a first aid kit on all premises where children and young people meet, and that it is checked frequently.
6. That all workers/leaders are involved in regular training, including first aid.
7. That telephones are easily available for use in case of emergencies.
8. That inexperienced workers and/all volunteers receive clear guidance and supervision at regular and agreed intervals.
9. That a trial period of three months takes place for all new volunteers, at the end of which both parties review the situation.



DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH

(Registered Charity Number 246871)

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICE

Guidelines for Best Practice

For all activities involving children there must be

1. A meeting during which a Risk Assessment (RA) is completed, at which time person/s responsible for the group are established. Make sure that they are aware of the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy or Parish policy and agree to follow guidelines re safe recruiting - Looking at leaders being properly recruited i.e. Application / References / Interview / CRB check. - And that guidelines re safe practice are adhered to. If the same activities are followed year after year it is ok to use the same RA provided circumstances have not changed.
2. Choosing appropriate premises for purpose.
3. Correct Adult to Child ratio
4. Permission gained and recorded for children to take part in the activity including basic medical information - consent to provide emergency medical help - permission for photographs to be taken and displayed (as appropriate) Agreement re signing in /out or permission for children to go home alone (if relevant)
5. Register of attendance completed - all adults and children present - times in and out recorded. Age of child recorded for Children's Liturgy
6. Incident logs completed whenever any incident/accident occurs. If an accident occurs make sure that the parent collecting has seen any accident log and signs the recorded entry.

At all these activities there should be available a file containing all the relevant forms and guidelines regarding bullying/drugs incidents. Suggest the COPCA Appendices is ideal for this.