

Congregational Child Protection Policy

Creating a safe environment for children, young people, leaders and staff.

Policy Statement

This policy statement is aimed at creating an environment for children and young people may enjoy social contact, personal and spiritual development and where they and the leaders and helpers working with them will be kept safe. Adults selected to work within youth ministries should be secure in the knowledge that they have the full support of the Kirk Session.

Adoption of Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) Child Protection Guidelines

The Kirk Session of Killead Presbyterian Church has adopted The Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Child Protection Guidelines, "Taking Care," as approved by the General Assembly and revised in 2011. All organisations are required to adhere to these Guidelines. The Kirk Session will review the policy every three years and keep "Taking Care" on the agenda of the Kirk Session meetings.

1. Leadership

The Kirk Session believes that the recruitment and appointment process outlined in the "Taking Care" guidelines greatly assists the assessment of a person's suitability to work with children and young people. As a result of implementing such procedures, leaders and helpers within this congregation will be more assured of their position and of the confidence placed in them by the Kirk Session.

The following procedures must be followed for the appointment of leaders/helpers of 18 years or over.

- All leaders will be required to complete an online Application Form.
- The application form includes the vetting process according to legislation and good practice.
- The Kirk Session will appoint up to two interviewers to meet informally with the applicant.
- At interview the child protection policy will be provided and explained. "We Care 4 U Too!" will also be provided.
- Applicants will be required to provide two references by persons who are not relatives.
- A letter of approval will be sent to the Designated Person from the Taking Care Office when the vetting process has been completed.

2. Training

All leaders and helpers who work with children and young people should attend "Taking Care" training on a regular basis (as church policy or legislation demands). Even those who have a good knowledge of child protection issues or have attended a similar course with another organisation must attend, as "Taking Care" is the only training available which is specifically dealing with church activities and within a church environment.

3. Reporting of Concerns

The leaders in each of our organisations will be fully conversant with the reporting procedure where there is concern about the welfare of a child, as outlined in the Taking Care guidelines. Leaders must not hesitate to report a concern about a child, if they are at any time worried about their welfare.

4. Designated Person

The Kirk Session has appointed the following Designated Person:

Mr Tom Lewis, 65 Ballyrobin Road, Antrim. BT41 4QS (Tel 028 9446 3166)

The Designated Person will give advice and support to organisations and to the Kirk Session on matters concerning the welfare of children and young people. The Kirk Session will keep organisational leaders updated with the name of the Designated Person. Any matter brought to the attention of the Designated Person will be treated in strict confidence. Information will be divulged only where there is a legitimate need to know.

5. Parental Consent Forms

Organisational leaders must ensure that they have home contact numbers, Parental Consent Forms and medical information regarding all the children in the organisation within which they are working. Special consent forms will be issued for any “off the premises” activities and residential programmes.

6. Good Standards of Practice

Each organisation will be expected to comply with good standards of practice as outlined in the “Taking Care” guidelines. This includes; physical contact, recommended ratios, transport, residential programmes and outings, church sleepovers, photographs and working with children who have special needs.

7. Working Together

It is important that all leaders know the boundaries and rules of an organisation and that these are explained to children and parents. A code of conduct for children and young people will be drawn up at the commencement of the year’s activities in each organisation. A code of conduct will help to create a safe, secure environment and an atmosphere where children will feel that they can relate to the leaders and helpers. All leaders must abide by the discipline guidelines as set out in Taking Care.

8. Technology

Leaders should strictly limit the direct internet communication they have with individual children and young people in the organisation of which they are leaders. All such communication with children and young people should, as far as possible, be within an open forum - in order to protect both young people and leaders. Leaders should be wise as to how they use this form of communication. Leaders should not post photographs of young people from the organisation in which they are leaders on a social networking site or anywhere on the internet, unless they have written parental consent. Leaders involved in youth and children’s work should only have children’s mobile numbers if the nature of their involvement requires them to phone or text children and if this is the case, contacting children through the use of mobile phones should be done in line with the “Taking Care” guidelines.

9. Health and Safety

The Kirk Session requires all organisations to adhere to the guidance on health and safety matters outlined in the “Taking Care” guidelines. A risk assessment form should be completed for each organisation as well as for any outings or occasional events. Leaders will be informed of fire and first aid procedures.

10. Implementation and Review

The Kirk Session is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and will review it every three years.

Signed: _____ (Minister)

_____ (Clerk of Session)

_____ (Designated Person)

Date: _____