

Congregational Safeguarding Children Policy

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

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland believes that everyone has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and to keep them safe.

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland believes that children should never experience abuse of any kind. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland is committed to safeguarding all children and protecting them from harm.

It is the policy of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to safeguard all children and young people interacting with its ministry in any form

This includes actively protecting children from all forms of harm or abuse

The Killead PC demonstrates and achieves this by providing this policy and accompanying procedures, for all involved in youth and children's work and any form of children or youth ministry within Killead PC, to ensure that children and young people enjoy their engagement with our Killead PC, free from the threat of abuse and in a safe environment.

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 Policy and Guidelines, as approved by the General Assembly and revised in 2026. All organisations are required to adhere to these Guidelines. The Kirk Session will review the policy every three years and keep safeguarding on the agenda of the Kirk Session meetings.

Biblical basis for Safeguarding

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland determine first and foremost that we have a biblical imperative for safeguarding. Safeguarding is imperative for Killead PC and a central component to our mission; when we do it well, we are proclaiming the excellencies of our Lord Jesus. It is therefore our duty to use the Bible as our reference point, where we find guidance in how to safeguard others as part of, not only our legal and ethical duty, but as who we are as a denomination at heart.

For example;

- love our neighbour as ourselves, (Lev 19:18 / Luke 10:27 / Gal 5:13-15)
- treat others as we would want to be treated (Matt 7:12)
- meet the needs of others (Romans 15:1-2 / Philippians 2:3-4)
- seek justice and correct oppression (Psalm 89:14 / Isaiah 1:17 / Micah 6:8)
- protecting the weak and those in need (Psalm 82:3-4/ Matt 18:10)

1. Leadership

The Kirk Session believes that the recruitment and appointment process outlined in the PCI Safeguarding 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.
- Applicants will be required to provide two references by persons who are not relatives.
- Notification will be sent to the Designated Person and the applicant 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 safeguarding training on a regular basis (every three years or as 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 this 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 PCI safeguarding 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 and these contact details will be clearly displayed in the church and halls. 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. The latest consent forms specified by PCI will be issued to all at the beginning of each annual session of the organisation and for any "off the premises" activities and residential programmes. The same applies to a young person joining mid-way through an annual session.

6. Good Standards of Practice

Each organisation will be expected to comply with good standards of practice as outlined in the PCI safeguarding 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 the safeguarding guidelines.

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 PCI safeguarding guidelines.

When live-streaming a service children should not be shown directly or in close-up. Only overviews should be used and only when strictly necessary.

9. Health and Safety

The Kirk Session requires all organisations to adhere to the guidance on health and safety matters outlined in the PCI safeguarding 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. Records Management

All records and notes pertaining to safeguarding issues are to be kept secure with access restricted to the safeguarding team.

11. 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: _____