

# **NEW APOSTOLIC CHURCH SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The trustees of the New Apostolic Church charity recognise the duty to ensure that arrangements to safeguard and to promote the welfare of all persons within the scope of the activities of the charity.

These arrangements reflect the needs of the children that we deal with and to protect vulnerable adults from abuse or the risk of abuse.

As part of its mission, the charity is committed to:

- respecting the rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults to a safe and secure environment free from harm;
- promoting the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults who participate in church activities (see Appendix A Safeguarding Practice Guidelines);
- supporting all who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults in church-related - and regular activities / administrative posts;
- ensuring that such individuals are appropriately selected and vetted, inducted, trained and supported in order to provide the highest duty of care to children & vulnerable adults;
- adopting a procedure for dealing with concerns about alleged abuse;
- supporting those affected by alleged abuse in the charity.

## **2. CHARITY POLICY**

The trustees, or those appointed by the trustees, recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for all persons. It also acknowledges that all persons can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. The trustees have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this document (hereafter “the policy”). It also recognises the need to build constructive links, as appropriate, with statutory and voluntary child protection agencies.

The policy and attached practice guidelines are based on a model published by the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service, known as ThirtyOne:eight (31:8). This

name is based on the chapter and verse in the book of Proverbs which describes part of the instruction to King Lemuel by his mother on kingship:

***Speak out on behalf of the speechless, and for the rights of all who are vulnerable*** (Common English Bible).

The Trustees also undertake to follow the principles found within the Abuse of Trust guidance issued by the Home Office and it is, therefore, unacceptable for those in a position of power and trust to engage in any abusive, intimidating, or other inappropriate behaviour which puts any vulnerable individuals at risk of harm.

In respect of Ireland, the Trustees are committed to working in partnership with **Tusla**, Ireland's dedicated state agency for Child Protection and Family Support (Child and Family Agency Act 2013) and with An Garda Síochána (Ireland's National Police Service), ensuring the welfare and safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults attending its activities in Ireland.

This document was drawn up with reference to the following legislation and Statutory Guidance documents:

2.1 United Kingdom (for Scotland – see 2.3):

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (SVG Act) 2006
- Charity Commission Guidance (England & Wales)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
- Safe Recruitment Guidance (DfE & NSPCC)

2.2 Ireland:

- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017).

2.3 Scotland:

- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Part V of the Police Act 1997
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021).

### 3. MANAGEMENT AND ARRANGEMENTS

Accountability for Safeguarding in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland remains the task of the Trustees. These tasks include:

- Duties include:
  - Setting and approving the safeguarding policy.
  - Ensuring proper systems and resources for safeguarding are in place.

- Regularly reviewing safeguarding arrangements (audits, annual reports, oversight of cases).
- Responding to the Charity Commission (UK) or Charities Regulator (Ireland) if serious incidents occur.
- Trustees **cannot delegate accountability** — even if they appoint safeguarding officers.
- Meet periodically, at least twice yearly, and records of meetings will be maintained.

### 3.1 United Kingdom and Scotland

In line with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007, and subsequent legislation, the New Apostolic Church recognises its responsibilities to safeguard children and adults at risk.

The following regulations apply to all ministers, staff, and volunteers:

- **Duty to Refer:** If a member of staff or volunteer is dismissed (or would have been dismissed had they not resigned) due to concerns that they harmed, or posed a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult, the Church has a legal duty to report this to the **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** in England and Wales or **Disclosure Scotland** in Scotland
- **Barred Individuals:** It is a criminal offence for any person who has been barred from working with children or adults at risk to seek or undertake work (paid or voluntary) in those settings. It is equally a criminal offence for any organisation to knowingly employ, or allow to volunteer, a barred person in regulated activity. Both offences may result in prosecution, fines, and/or imprisonment.
- **Safer Recruitment Checks:** All New Apostolic Church ministers and church workers who have contact with children or adults at risk must undergo an **enhanced DBS check** (England/Wales) or **PVG Scheme membership check** (Scotland). These checks must be renewed every **three years**, either through a fresh application or via the DBS Update Service.
- **Use of Existing Certificates:** Should a minister produce a valid and current enhanced DBS/PVG certificate achieved through another source, this certificate may be accepted as part of the recruitment decision. However, where appropriate, the Church reserves the right to seek confirmation through the Update Service, or to require a new enhanced DBS/PVG check before confirming an appointment.

- **Non-Compliance:** Where a minister, staff member, or volunteer fails to provide a valid and up-to-date DBS/PVG certificate, the Church may remove them from duties involving children or adults at risk until compliance is achieved. (See **Appendix C** for the DBS/PVG reminder and renewal process.)

3.1.1 **Confidentiality and Keeping of Records:** Adequate steps shall be taken to always maintain confidentiality. The church will comply with the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 and other relevant legislation.

3.1.2 **Secure Storage, Handling, Use, Retention & Disposal of Disclosures Data:** The Church aims to comply with Thirty-one:eight (31:8) / Disclosure Scotland's code of practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information and has a written policy on these matters, which is available to those who wish to see it on request.

3.1.2.1 **Storage and access:** Disclosure information should be kept securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

3.1.2.2 **Handling:** Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it during the execution of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

3.1.2.3 **Usage:** Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

3.1.2.4 **Retention:** Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, Disclosure information will not be kept for any longer than is necessary. This is generally for a period of up to 6 months to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep disclosure information for longer than six months, we will consult 31:8 and Disclosure Scotland about this and will consider the data protection and human rights of the individual before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding the safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

3.1.2.5 **Disposal:** Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately destroyed by secure means. While awaiting destruction Disclosure information will be kept in any secure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack). We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the Disclosure or any copy or representation of the contents of a Disclosure. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of Disclosure requested, the position for which the Disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

### 3.2 Ireland:

- **Garda Vetting** (Republic of Ireland): All leaders of children in Ireland must have carried out a Garda vetting check prior to their appointments.
- Although Under the **National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012–2016**, there is no set statutory time limit for how long vetting remains valid, **Tusla (Children First Guidance 2017)** and safeguarding bodies recommend **periodic re-vetting**, particularly if the individual is continuing in a long-term role. Therefore, the New Apostolic Church will require Garda vetting renewal **at least every 3 years**, as best practice. These checks may be either through a fresh application or via the online Update Service, if available.

#### **Appointment of Children’s Leaders – Garda Vetting:**

The New Apostolic Church Éire Safeguarding Committee (SGC) reserves the right to refuse or withdraw approval for the appointment of any individual to a leadership role with children if the Garda Vetting disclosure contains information that indicates the person may pose a risk to children or vulnerable persons. All such decisions will be made in line with the Church’s safeguarding policy, relevant legislation, and the principle that **the welfare of the child is paramount**.

## **4. RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS**

### 4.1. United Kingdom

Under no circumstances should any persons tasked, employed, volunteering or associated with the charity, carry out their own investigation into the allegation or suspicions of neglect or abuse. The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse will do the following:

- Concerns must be reported as soon as possible to:
  - To The New Apostolic Church UK and Ireland Safeguarding Lead, Emily Phillips (Tel/Mbl number 07577564306) or a Safeguarding professional who is nominated by the Trustees to take the lead for safeguarding matters and to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities, OR
  - The Police, as a crime or incident report, or Local County Social Services - to their Safeguarding reporting line.
- The Trustees may also be required by conditions of the church insurance policy to immediately inform the Insurance company.

- If the suspicions implicate the Lead on safeguarding matters, then the report should be made to **Thirty-one:eight, PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent BR8 7UQ, Tel: 0845 120 4550 (24 hour service) or contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 (Scotland).**
- Suspicions are to only be discussed with the Trustees/Safeguarding Committee, and their advisor/s. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with the church procedures and kept in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Lead, the absence of the safeguarding Lead should not delay referral to Thirty-one:eight (31:8).
- The Trustees and Safeguarding Committee accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make direct contact with Thirty-one:eight 31:8.
- The role of the Safeguarding Lead/Officers on safeguarding matters is to collate the facts of the allegation or suspicion as far as possible until referral to Safeguarding or the Police is appropriate. Depending on the allegation or suspicion raised, this may also involve consulting with the Trustees, Thirty-one:eight (31:8), or Local Authority Safeguarding Officers in the local County Social Services.

#### 4.2 **Ireland – Reporting and Referral Procedures**

All leaders and volunteers of the New Apostolic Church Éire will be fully familiar with the consultation and referral procedures where there is a concern about the welfare or protection of a child, as set out in the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017).

Concerns must be referred to the Church's Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in the first instance, who will consult as necessary and ensure that a report is made to **Tusla – Child and Family Agency** without delay.

Where a child is considered to be at **immediate risk of harm**, or where a criminal offence may have been committed, An Garda Síochána must also be informed.

See the following link to the Tusla reporting site: <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/contact-a-social-worker3/>.

Subject to TUSLA guidance, consultation or communication with the safeguarding committee Lead should also occur.

## **5. ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL INJURY, NEGLECT OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

If a child or vulnerable adult has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the minister, volunteer, or member should take whatever reasonable and appropriate immediate action is necessary to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and notify the committee chair. Depending on what action has already occurred, the Committee chair will:

- Contact Local Authority Safeguarding, Thirty-one:eight or Police for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a Child's safety or if a Child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers if there are reasonable grounds to believe the injury was caused by parental abuse or neglect, unless advised to do so by Children's social services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- Seek and follow advice given by local authority safeguarding and 31:8 (who will confirm their advice in writing) with regard to formally referring the case to Safeguarding.

## **6. ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

In event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Committee chair will:

- Firstly, consult with the trustees to review the matter and obtain greater clarity.
- Once the safeguarding risk has been corroborated, the lead trustee on safeguarding matters will contact Children's Social Services Department Duty social worker for children and families or Police Child Protection direct, or local authority safeguarding in the case of vulnerable adults. They will not speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by 31:8 if for any reason they are unsure whether to contact the Children's Social Services/Police.

## **7. TRAINING OF MINISTERS & VOLUNTEERS**

The trustees are committed to on-going safeguarding training for all persons tasked, employed or volunteering within the charity.

### **7.1 United Kingdom & Scotland.**

The Trustees will ensure all persons tasked, employed or volunteering within the charity will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with the policies set out in government guidelines, Thirty-one:eight guidance and the Church practice guidelines. Local congregational safeguarding leads will assist in ensuring that safeguarding procedures are communicated to teachers and lead ministers.

### **7.2 Ireland**

All leaders must attend a training session which covers the Safeguarding Policy, procedures, and protocols to be adhered to within the congregations. Included in the training will be guidance on recognising signs of abuse, and reporting procedures.

## **8. SUPERVISION OF GROUP/CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES**

The Trustees and those appointed by the Trustees will provide details of the supervision for each specific activity in the charity's practical guidelines.

## **9. SUPPORT TO THOSE AFFECTED BY ABUSE**

The Trustees and those appointed by the Trustees are committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support those attending charity activities that have been affected by abuse.

## **10. IDENTIFIED OR SUSPECTED OFFENDERS**

The charity reserves the right to implement policy to exclude any known or suspected offenders from attending any regulated or unregulated activity. The trustees will present alternative pastoral care to identified or suspected offenders.

## **11. POLICY REVIEW**

The Trustees will ensure compliance with the Child Protection Policy and practice guidelines which may be amended from time to time as well as relevant legislation.

This policy will be reviewed annually.



D Heynes Executive Trustee

27<sup>th</sup> August 2025

### Appendices

- A: Safeguarding Practice Guidelines
- B: Publishing Photography in Official Publications and Websites
- C: Reminder Process



## **APPENDIX A: SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

### **1. Introduction**

The Church is a member of Thirty-one:Eight (31:8).

Churches and groups working with children and vulnerable adults need to take special care in the work they undertake, including ensuring a comprehensive Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy is operating. It is worth noting that the Charity Commission requires a written child protection policy to be in place before it will grant charitable status to any organisation working with children and vulnerable people. The Church's insurers also require the Church to have an effective Child Protection Policy. There are two main aspects to the Church's Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy:

1.1. To be able to detect child or vulnerable adult abuse and to have a process for dealing with these issues. For example, a) what could a child or vulnerable person do in such circumstances or b) what should a minister, volunteer or church member do if they suspect someone is abusing children or vulnerable persons.

1.2 To have appropriate and compliant procedures for the appointment and monitoring of ministers and volunteers who work with children or supervise children's activities.

### **2. Detecting Abuse**

2.1 Definitions of Child or Vulnerable Adult Abuse. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children or vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. The following are further definitions of child or vulnerable adult abuse:

#### **2.1.1 Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child or vulnerable adult whom they are looking after. This is commonly described using terms such as 'fictitious illness by proxy' or 'Munchausen Syndrome by proxy'.

#### **2.1.2 Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and continuous adverse effects on the child or vulnerable adult's emotional development. It may involve conveying to the child or vulnerable adult that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only 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 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.

### 2.1.3 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or vulnerable adult 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.

### 2.1.4 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child or vulnerable adult's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child or vulnerable adult 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 or vulnerable adult's basic emotional needs.

## 2.2 Suspected Child or Vulnerable Adult Abuse

Where Abuse is suspected please refer to the Safeguarding Policy for full detail and report as soon as possible in the first instance to the Committee Chair.

## 2.3 Recognising Possible Signs of Abuse

When a child or vulnerable adult wants to talk about abuse, it is important for the worker to listen carefully to what the child or vulnerable adult says without prompting or using leading questions. The church minister or volunteer should make a careful written record of what has been observed as follows:

- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the child or vulnerable adult talking) including a description of any injury, its size, and a drawing of its location and shape on the child or vulnerable adult's body.
- Write down exactly what the child or vulnerable adult has said and when s/he said it, what was said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity).
- Write down the dates and times of these events and when the record was made.
- Write down any action taken and keep all handwritten notes even if subsequently typed up.

- These notes should be passed to the Committee chair to assist them should the matter need to be referred to Social Services.
- All documents should be signed, dated and kept for an indefinite period in a secure place.

### **3. Guidance for Specific Circumstances**

#### **3.1 Taking Care of Touching**

- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the minister's or volunteers.
- Avoid any physical activity that is or may be described as 'Sexual touch' under the Sexual Offences Act (2003: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42>). This is any touch on any part of the body with sexual intent.
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child or vulnerable adult rather than the minister or volunteer.
- Children or vulnerable adults are entitled to privacy to ensure personal dignity.
- Children or vulnerable adults have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances when they need urgent medical attention.
- When giving first aid or taking essential safety precautions (such as putting on a seat belt or applying sun cream for a child or vulnerable adult unable to do so themselves), encourage the child to do what they can manage themselves, but consider the child's best interests and give appropriate help where necessary.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact, for example by publicly asking a colleague to observe an action which might be misconstrued such as putting on a seat belt or putting on sunscreen. They should be free to help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
- Concerns about abuse should always be reported.

#### **3.2 Pastoral Care Visits**

Ministers and volunteers may need to visit families and children at home from time to time. The parents/carers may or may not attend church and it is important therefore they have been given information about the church, the proposed visitors and visit details (time, date, duration, etc.) including contact telephone numbers. Formal identification cards are issued to all ordained church ministers in the NAC and these should be carried and shown if appropriate.

Guidelines for visiting:

- Inform the Rector or District Rector of the proposed visit.
- Arrange the visit with a responsible adult, or the parents or guardians of children, rather than with the children themselves.
- Never go into a child's home if a parent/carer is absent, and care should be taken in entering the home of a vulnerable adult, especially if alone.
- Children should not normally visit minister's or volunteer's homes unless this is part of a group activity (e.g., Sunday School activity) with full Rector or District Rector knowledge and approval, and with the visit overseen by Ministers and volunteers who have DBS or DBS Scotland or relevant Irish Garda procedures as appropriate.
- In keeping with long-standing policy, unaccompanied ministers (who are currently exclusively male) should not visit female members who live alone.
- Pastoral care visits should usually be about listening to the member(s) and their situation and concerns, rather than talking. A brief record of the visit may be kept which states any purpose other than pastoral care, time of arrival and departure, and any difficult issues or topics which were raised. These records should be kept confidential unless there is a good reason to share them with a more senior Minister.
- Should information regarding abuse or alleged abuse come to the fore, immediately follow the notification procedure as detailed in section 4.1 of the Safeguarding Policy.
- During and after a pastoral care visit, care should be taken to respect confidentiality; appropriate boundaries should be respected for conversation, listening and comment; and any need for medical, psychological, financial or other professional advice should be directed to such professionals rather than being provided in a pastoral care visit.

### 3.3 Transporting Children

As a church we have many scattered members who are transported to church by members with cars and also, we often have youth and other meetings which require transportation for members.

In addition to the guidance below, there are regulations on transporting children up to the age of 12 which must be complied with. This includes members who regularly take families with children to church. The website for full details on the law is-

[www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk/campaigns/childcarseats/pdf/law-leaflet.pdf](http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk/campaigns/childcarseats/pdf/law-leaflet.pdf)

### 3.4 Guidelines for Transporting Children

These guidelines should apply to all drivers involved in the transportation of children and young people, organised by or on behalf of the Church. They do not apply to private arrangements for transportation made, for example, between parties with parental responsibility.

Our advice on transporting children is as follows:

- Only those who have gone through the church/ organisation recruitment procedures for ministers or volunteers should transport children.
- All drivers should have read the Safeguarding Policy of the Church and agree to abide by it.
- Parental consent should be given, and all journeys should be carried out with the knowledge of the relevant Rector or District Rector of the Church.
- Any motor vehicle adapted to carry more than eight passengers for hire or reward is regarded in law as a Public Service Vehicle (PSV). A small bus permit is therefore required for all mini buses used to carry between 6 and 16 passengers. All minibuses used to transport children should therefore have a small bus permit, the necessary insurance, and a driver with a valid driving licence that entitles them to drive a minibus.
- If the Church uses a mini-bus and the children/young people are asked to make a contribution towards the trip, there is a legal requirement to obtain a Section 9 permit from the Department of the Environment, Transport & the Regions.
- The law no longer permits car drivers who passed their test after 1st January 1997 to drive mini-buses without passing a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) driving test or unless they are driving under a section 19 permit. This does not apply to licence holders who were over 21 years of age in 1997. Check what categories a minister or volunteer is entitled to drive by examining their driving licence. Whilst there is no law forbidding young or inexperienced drivers from transporting young people, some churches stipulate that they will use legislation relating to minibuses as a guide ie the driver should be 21 or over and have held a full driving licence for at least two years.
- The driver must hold a full driving licence, have adequate insurance and the vehicle should be road worthy. (The Church should have sight of supporting documentation prior to approval being given. This can be done annually to provide a pool of approved drivers)
- Having checked drivers, (application form, interview, references etc) it is reasonable to expect that they may be alone with a child for short periods e.g. dropping off the last child. Consideration could be given to dropping off the least vulnerable child last and plan routes accordingly. Two workers in a car does not in itself guarantee protection for a child - there have been incidents where workers have acted abusively together and in this situation a child could be less protected.

- Drivers should not spend unnecessary time alone in a car with a child. If a child wants to talk to a driver about something and has waited until other children have been dropped off, the driver should explain that it isn't convenient to talk there and then but arrange to meet the child / young person at a location where there are other adults around. (Remember a child / young person may want to talk to the driver about an abusive situation).
- When travelling in groups with more than one vehicle it is good practice to insist children stay in the same groups on the outgoing and return journey. This will avoid the confusion over whether a child has been transported home or at worst left behind.
- If travelling in convoy with cars and minibuses, please note that the maximum speed for a minibus is 50 mph on single carriageway roads, 60 mph on dual carriageways, and 70 mph on motorways.
- At collection or dropping off points do not leave a child on their own. Make sure that children are collected by an appropriate adult.
- It is advisable to be aware of instances where it may be unwise for a driver to transport a child e.g., where there has been a disagreement or where there is reason to believe there is any sexual or romantic interest by either party.
- If parents transport children to and from activities, ensure that all are made aware that they do so under their responsibility and not the church's. Members should avoid transporting unaccompanied children below the age of 18. A parent should always be present to supervise their child(ren).
- 31:8 recommends that when using minibuses for transporting children, seatbelts should be fitted for all passengers. This is compulsory for vehicles registered on or after 01/10/2001.

### 3.5 Unsubstantiated Allegations

It is important to stress that all allegations should be properly investigated so as to establish the truth. Individuals who have a history of making unsubstantiated allegations may also be the subject of abuse, so all allegations should be investigated. The retraction of an allegation does not mean that it was not accurate. Even where there are strong beliefs held that the allegation will not be substantiated, an investigation should still occur.

### 3.6 Publishing photographic information

See Appendix B to this policy.

## 4. **Health & Safety**

Buildings being used for children's groups should be properly maintained. The external fabric of the building, plus all internal fixtures, fittings, lighting, fire exits and equipment should meet the required safety standards and an annual review should be carried out to consider all aspects of safety for children and young people using the premises.

There should be adequate toilets and wash hand basins and when food is being prepared, hygiene requirements must be observed.

Provision should be made for an appropriately qualified first-aider to be available together with an adequate first aid kit.

## **APPENDIX B: PHOTOGRAPHY AND ONLINE VIDEO CONFERENCING**

### **1. Introduction.**

The internet is a wonderful tool for sharing our moments of joy. We cannot, however, ignore the risk of exploitation or misuse of images that the internet brings, especially to children and vulnerable adults. We have therefore developed some guidance for publishing photography at church events and uploading images onto the church website, and for those who wish to withdraw photos from the church website.

This policy is based on the following principles:

- The need to protect children and vulnerable adults from becoming victims of or targets for grooming as a result of photography at church events or images placed on the church website.
- The right of the church to place images of church activities, events and services on websites in order to share these events with members who were not able to attend and to advertise the church's range of activities.
- The principles contained in the Human Rights Act (1988), particularly Article 8, the right to a family and private life, and Article 10, The right of freedom of expression.
- Until written consent has been given by or on behalf of all subjects, no photograph will be published.

### **2. Guidelines for photographers.**

The various points below must be read in conjunction with all points as many of them clarify each other.

- Photographers are not to take photographs for their own personal use or storage, except of their own family members or friends, and then only if consent is given (see 1 above).
- Photographs of children shall not be used in our official church publications or on our Church website without written consent from the parent or guardian.
- For any church event (excluding divine service) where photographs will be taken for the purpose of updating a congregational website, then a clear and appropriate announcement is to be made by the photographer, event organizer or the senior minister asking for any objections to be made clearly known to the announcer or photographer.
- Avoid images that show a single vulnerable adult without no surrounding context of what they are learning or doing.



- Ensure that all vulnerable adults are appropriately dressed.
- The smaller the group and the more invasive of someone's identity or privacy the photograph will be, the more explicit consent needs to be. When photographs are taken of a church service or large activity, for example, an announcement may be made that large group photos will be taken, and members who do not give their consent can be asked to let the photographer know (and should be given an opportunity to do so). This does not have to be in writing.
- Reports accompanying photographs should not contain any negative or sensitive statement.

### **3. Guidelines**

#### **3.1 Church Officers taking photographs or uploading images to websites accessible on the internet.**

- Any images uploaded should be unambiguous as to the context, tasteful as to the dress and activity portrayed in the image, and wholesome in terms of what it conveys about the subjects in the image and the church as a whole.
- Particular care should be taken not to include any photos or images of children.

Other considerations:

- Will one of the people pictured be brought into disrepute by the publication?
- Will someone's feelings be hurt?
- Is a person's privacy violated?
- Would I be unhappy with the publication of such an image of myself?

#### **3.2 Members or others who want an uploaded image removed or wish to comment on the policy or guidelines.**

Members should approach the local organiser of the event in the first instance and raise their concern or contact the church's officer on this matter.

### **4. Online Video Conferencing**

4.1 Parents who wish for their children to be involved in online teaching are to do the following:

- Execute the guidance provided by the government regarding keeping children safe online as linked below:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online>
- Complete a consent form and register this form with the administration office [admin-hq@btconnect.com](mailto:admin-hq@btconnect.com) before children engage in online teaching carried out on internet platforms.
- See:  
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/g8ipvcwy18ginjp/CONSENT%20FOR%20ONLINE%20ACTIVITIES.docx?dl=0>

4.2 Organisers to execute the following guidance when using online platforms for video meetings

- Teachers to be DBS certified before conducting an online event with children.
- Ensure that advice is given to only use online platforms downloaded from a trusted source.
- Don't advertise the meeting ID and password on publicly accessible forums – instead try to send direct email invites.
- If the platform allows, use the 'waiting room' feature to better control access to the meeting.
- If the platform allows, lock the meeting once all are joined.
- Disable participant screen sharing.
- Do not record meetings unless absolutely necessary and with consent from all involved.
- Know how to expel a participant quickly and place a call 'on-hold' in the event of an incident or concern.

For further information regarding arrangement of pastoral care events during Covid 19, view the following link: <https://www.scie.org.uk/care-providers/coronavirus-covid-19/safeguarding/faith-based-organisations>

**APPENDIX C: RENEWAL PROCESS FOR DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS) / PROTECTING VULNERABLE PERSONS SCHEME (PVG) / GARDA VETTING BUREAU (GVB)**

For ministers and volunteers who have enhanced DBS / PVG / GVB certifications which are due to expire, the following reminder process will be observed:

1. First Reminder. 1 month prior to expiration, a message is sent to the minister or volunteer requesting that he / she renew their certification or produce a DBS update service certificate number (UK), and of the full procedure below.
2. Second reminder. Sent a week prior to expiration and the minister or volunteer's lead minister is informed.
3. Last reminder. At expiration of certification, the minister or volunteer is sent a message advising that their certification has expired and that they have 14 days to complete the renewal process. Lead ministers are updated.
4. If after 14 days the minister or volunteer has not renewed their DBS, the matter is forwarded to the Apostle for review of continuation in their roles.
5. Blemished Certificates. Should a certificate return with compromising information that could preclude the individual from acting within their voluntary role, the Safeguarding Committee will review the blemish and confirm the recruitment decision with due regard for the safeguarding of vulnerable persons and children. The form to be used is linked as follows: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/xc0poqevf3ddqfo2clk7f/DBS-Blemish-record.xlsx?rlkey=kwrwg8w7d9atp43uh4x91gn&dl=0>