

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Ballyclare Baptist Church



Introduction

Ballyclare Baptist Church believes that all children and young people should enjoy all activities in and organised by Ballyclare Baptist Church without fear of harm. Ballyclare Baptist Church, with the assistance of all leaders and helpers, will take every appropriate step to ensure the safety and well being of children and young people with whom we work, regardless of class, race or creed.

We will endeavour to safeguard children by:

- Adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for all leaders and helpers;
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with all workers, children and parents;
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately;
- Providing effective management for all leaders and helpers through supervision, support and training;
- Ensuring that all workers undergo a police check.

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice at regular intervals.

Rationale

Ballyclare Baptist Church is committed to reaching out to children and to teaching them the message of salvation as contained in the Bible, the Word of God. We also seek to promote the general welfare, health and full development of every child, recognising the privilege and responsibility this brings to all involved in our organisation.

Today child abuse and child abuse accusations are occurring frequently. This is a sad fact of life. It is also a fact that amongst Christian people, as in the wider society, children can be hurt. So in our various ministries we cannot be satisfied until we are sure we have done all in our power to protect them from harm of all kinds, and to protect our leaders and helpers from false accusations, hence the production of this Child Protection Policy.

In Ballyclare Baptist Church we realise that this publication is necessary, because in these days of social change and shifting moral values, parents entrust their children to us for nurture, safe care and wise leadership. It is imperative that there are guidelines and procedures in place that will provide peace of mind to parents, children and workers. This publication does not call into question the integrity of our children's and youth workers; it is produced in response to the recommendations of our Government and to our desire to provide **EVANGELISM WITH CARE**.

Background

In Northern Ireland there are approximately 90 cases of child abuse reported **every week** and it is suspected that two-thirds of all abuse cases go unreported.

This is a worldwide problem and the United Nations issued a Convention on the Rights of the Child, which the UK government signed in December 1991. In November 1996 the Children (NI) Order 1995 came into being enshrining in law many of the principles of the convention.

UN Convention on the rights of the child

The UN Convention is "a set of minimum standards - the bottom line - in protecting children's rights. It is a binding international treaty, which the British government signed at the United Nations, committing itself to give children the rights and protections written in the Convention" (Our Duty to Care Factsheet 1).

According to the Convention, children have rights relating to:

- Reasonable standards of living;
- Protection from violence, abuse, and exploitation;
- Protection for those cared for away from home and for those with a disability;
- Being able to use their own language, enjoy their own culture, and practise their own religion;
- The protection of the environment in which they live.

Children (NI) Order 1995

The Children (NI) Order 1995 deals with the care, upbringing, and protection of children. It brings most of the public and private laws relating to children into one place. It has five underlying principles, which have clear implications for all involved in work with children and young people.

The key principles are:

- **Paramountcy** - The welfare of the child **must always be** the paramount consideration in decisions taken about him or her;
- **Parental responsibility** - Parents have responsibilities to their children rather than rights over them;
- **Prevention** - This is about preventing situations arising where children are unnecessarily separated from their families. It is also about the State providing services to keep children safely within their families and to promote their health or welfare;
- **Partnership** – This encourages us to work in partnership with parents and other agencies, as the most effective way of ensuring that a child's needs are met;
- **Protection** – This places a 'duty of care' on all who work with children to report child protection concerns to the appropriate agencies.

In the light of this legislation, it is prudent of us as a fellowship to do whatever we can to ensure the protection of the children with whom we come into contact. In so doing, we will be giving parents confidence in our ministries, knowing that whilst in our care, we will make every effort to protect their children from harm.

This document attempts to set out clear guidelines and procedures for all leaders and helpers. It includes a Code of Behaviour that every worker must follow, not only to protect the child, but also to protect themselves from allegations of abuse. God's word reminds us to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matt 10:16). May we so be, for the sake of the children entrusted to us.

Definitions

- Child: any person under the age of **18** years old;
- Vulnerable Adult: any person aged 18 or over who:-
 - is in need of assistance by reason of mental, physical or learning disability, age or illness and who:
 - is unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation which may be occasioned by the acts or omissions of other people;
- Leader/s in charge: the person/persons responsible for overseeing the organisation and safety of the children within their area of ministry;
- Helper: any person who assists the leader/s-in-charge within each area of ministry; this person may not always be a member of the church
- Event - any of the ministries within the fellowship e.g. Sunday School, children's meeting e.g. KidZone, Junior and Senior Youth Fellowships, Teaching Crèche, Baby Crèche and any other additional events organised by the church.

Child Abuse

The following are the definitions for Child Abuse as found in the Children (NI) Order 1995 guidelines "Co-operating to protect children":

Physical Abuse:	Is the deliberate physical injury to a child or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering;
Emotional Abuse:	Is 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 insofar as they meet the needs of another person;
Sexual Abuse:	This involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may include physical activities or non-contact activities such as forcing the child to view pornography;
Neglect:	Is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve failing to provide adequate foods, shelter, clothing, and medical care;

Bullying:

Is not in itself a form of abuse, but a child who is bullied may be suffering any of the types of abuse defined above. It takes many forms but the main types are:

- Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft);
- Verbal (e.g. sectarian/racist remarks, name calling);
- Indirect (e.g. spreading rumours);
- Texting (e.g. through mobile phones).

The damage inflicted by bullying, can frequently be underestimated.

Exploitation: *

Exploitation is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

**Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register, professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing CPR categories as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse.*



Code of Behaviour

General principles

In all Ballyclare Baptist Church's activities, workers should give children appropriate time to express their opinions. All children should be valued and respected as individuals and workers should be available to listen to the children whenever necessary. Workers are encouraged to praise children for good behaviour and show consistency in their approach to each child. Workers should encourage the children to participate in all the activities, which are available, and their achievements should be recognised.

Guidelines for the protection of all youth workers

It doesn't make sense to:

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others;
- Take children alone in a car on journeys, however short. Where this is unavoidable, it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the parents, and someone in charge of the event;
- Contact children via mobile phones or the Internet without parental consent. Workers should not normally make their mobile phone numbers or email addresses available to the children;
- Take photos or video footage of a child without parental consent.

We should **never**...

- Engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay - apart from structured sports activities;
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
- Make **unnecessary** physical contact with children;
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- Make sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a child;
- Let allegations a child makes go without being addressed and recorded;
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves.

Physical contact with children

Physical contact should only ever take place with the consent of the child.

- There may be contact during sports or games, but remember your size and strength, and so restrict your involvement for the safety of the children;
- Physical contact of a comforting and reassuring nature is a valid way of expressing your concern and care. However, ***it is only appropriate if it is meeting the need of the child.***

Managing Behaviour and Physical Restraint

All efforts to *promote positive behaviour and discipline* will be adhered to at all times. In the unlikely event that physical restraint will need to be employed between two or more children or vulnerable adults, only that which pertains to reasonable restraint measures should be used.

Meeting with individual children for counselling/guidance

- Meeting with individual children should take place as openly as possible;
- If privacy is needed, the door should be left open and other team members informed of the meeting;
- If counselling/guidance is taking place other than at a Ballyclare Baptist Church event, then the leader/helper should:
 - Agree an appointment date and time;
 - Agree venue;
 - Gain consent from, and confirm all details with the leader in charge;
 - Gain consent from parents;
 - Where possible, ensure there is someone else on the premises for the duration of the counselling/guidance session.

Contact with children outside of Ballyclare Baptist Church events

Children can visit friends at the homes of leaders/helpers only with the parental consent of both sets of parents.

Personal relationships

Workers involved in relationships with other workers or older members, should ensure that their personal relationships do not affect their role within the ministry or put children in a potentially harmful situation.

Supervision

- Children should **never** be left unsupervised while in our care.
- Leaders in charge must be satisfied that those workers and adults who accompany group parties are fully competent to do so;
- Children will always be safer when supervised by two or more **adults**;
- When only two adults are present in the room, *as far as possible* they should be one male and one female and not members of the same family;
- Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment should have constant adult supervision;
- Dangerous behaviour by children should not be allowed;

- Workers should know at all times where children are and what they are doing;
- In a "meeting" situation, a **minimum** ratio of 1 adult to 8 children should be attained, and on outings this ratio should be increased to a **minimum** of 1 adult to 5 children.

The standard recommended ratios are:

0-2 years	1 member of staff to 3 children
2-3 years	1 member of staff to 4 children
3-7 years	1 member of staff to 8 children
8 years and over	2 members of staff, (preferably one of each gender), for up to 20 children

** There should be one additional staff member for every 10 extra children or young persons.*

Supervision of children on journeys/outings/trips

- The organisers of journeys/visits should plan and prepare a detailed programme of activities for the children who are involved in the project;
- Organisers are responsible for the welfare and safety of the children for the **whole time** they are away from home;
- Young people should not be left to their own devices, for example, in a town for the evening or on shopping expeditions. However parental consent may be sought for older teens to have less direct supervision as long as they stay in groups;
- All children should be adequately supervised and engaged in suitable activities at all times;
- In circumstances when planned activities are disrupted, e.g. due to weather conditions, then organisers should have a number of alternative activities planned;
- Organisers should obtain, in writing, parental consent for children joining an organised trip;
- Parents should be given full information about a trip, including details of the programme of events, the activities in which the children will be engaged and the supervision ratios.

In public with children

- Think of how you appear in public when dealing with children;
- The safety of the child is paramount at all times;
- Do not go into the toilets alone with the children; if at all possible, have another adult present;
- Should the need for care of an intimate nature arise try, if at all possible, to seek the assistance of another adult, and inform the parent of the intimate care taken as soon as possible;
- Do not shout at or roughly handle a child;
- Parental permission **must** be obtained from the person(s) who has (have) parental responsibility, before taking a child to any place other than the usual venue.

Parental responsibility

The following defines what is meant by parental responsibility:

- The natural mother **always** has parental responsibility (except where an adoption order is made);
- The natural father if married to the mother before the birth of the child, if he subsequently marries the mother, or if he has jointly registered the birth of the child also has parental responsibility;
- Other members of the family may have parental responsibility if they have been granted it by the courts.

NB – Failure by any leader/helper to adhere to this code of behaviour may result in removal from office.



Sharing Information

... with children and young people

Under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, children have a *Right to Information*, especially any information that would make life better and safer for them. At all Ballyclare Baptist Church events, children/young people should be informed:

- Of the rules and regulations of the event they are attending, and of our expectations of them, including how they behave towards other individuals;
- Of the fire safety procedures of the venue at which the event is held;
- Of the facilities that are available for their use at the venue, e.g. toilets, tuck-shop;
- About how, and with whom, they can share their concerns, complaints, and anxieties.

This information will usually be given by the leader in charge at the commencement of the event.

... with parents

Parents are responsible for their children's welfare at all times, and they should be assured that their children are involved with a credible and caring organisation.

They should be aware of the nature of relationships with adults with whom their children form friendships.

To support this we should:

- Publicise information about our events e.g. visit homes regarding Good News Clubs/Five Day Clubs; hold a parents' information evening regarding a camp or youth weekend;
- Make them aware of our Child Protection Policy;
- Make them aware of whom they should contact if they have concerns or complaints;
- Inform them of the Code of Behaviour for workers and volunteers involved in the ministry of the fellowship.

... with workers and volunteers

Good information will enable staff and volunteers to know how to deal with emergencies and child protection issues. It will also enable them to pass on concerns to the appropriate person within the fellowship.

Therefore, **all** workers will undergo training in child protection policy and procedures. This training will be updated at regular intervals.

Manner of sharing information

When sharing information, we will be sensitive to the level of understanding, maturity, and responsibility of the people with whom we are sharing the information. For example, the sharing of policy and procedures with children will be done in a manner appropriate to their age.

Reporting Procedures

Designated Person

The designated person i.e. the Child Protection coordinator, or assistant CP coordinator, is the individual within the fellowship to whom all concerns and disclosures should be brought. The coordinator may be contacted at any time for advice/guidance. The coordinator may then discuss the concern/suspicion/allegation with Social Services, and, if appropriate, make a direct referral. It is not necessary for the coordinator to hear any disclosure first-hand. This eliminates the need for the child to recount a traumatic experience more than once.

Checking concerns

If something gives you cause for concern, there are some things you can do to check your concern:

- Ask the child – If the child has an injury you could ask, “What happened to you?” or if the child is upset, simply asking, “What’s wrong?” is enough to give the child an opportunity to open up;
- Ask other workers – other workers may have insight into the situation that will immediately put your mind at ease. If not, they may have noticed something that will reinforce your concern;
- Ask the parents – when leaving the child home, or when the parent comes to collect the child, it is possible to ask quite informally, “I noticed she wasn’t her usual bubbly self tonight. Is she all right?” Doing so will give the parent an opportunity to put your mind at ease. The problem might simply be that the child’s pet has died. The parent’s response will guide you as to what to do next.

Remember – **do not investigate**. Your responsibility lies in reporting concerns to the relevant person who will then deal with the matter appropriately.

Reporting procedure - concerns

If you have concerns about a child:

- Fill in a "Record of allegations or suspicions of abuse" form - try to include as much detail as possible - document the reasons for your concern, e.g. bruising, lethargy, sexual conversation inappropriate to the age of the child etc.
- Send the form to the CP coordinator who will contact you to clarify anything they don’t understand;
- Quietly monitor the situation and report any further developments to the Child Protection coordinator making sure these developments are recorded;
- Do not discuss your concerns openly with other workers unless you think they may be able to shed some light on the situation. Be discreet!

Reporting procedure – disclosures

If a child comes to you and begins to disclose abuse, these are the guidelines, which should be followed:

DO

Stay calm

Listen – give time to the child to say what he/she wants

Reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing in telling

Record in writing what was said as soon as possible (see appendices)

Report send to Child Protection coordinator

DON'T

Panic

Ask leading questions e.g. "Did your dad..?"

Promise to keep secrets

Inquire into details of the abuse

Make a child repeat the story unnecessarily

Some further help

- Record the discussion accurately, as soon as possible after it has taken place, *even if it is information you do not understand fully, or like writing down*. **It is important** - stick with it! (See form "Record of Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse");
- **Record any discussions or actions taken within 24 hours;**
- Remember - information must only ever be passed on whenever there is a "**need-to-know**" basis. All concerns and disclosures need to remain as confidential as possible;
- If the Child Protection coordinator or the assistant coordinator for Child Protection is not available, please contact one of the others listed at the back of the document.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Designated Person for Child Protection

What it is:

- To advise the church oversight, and leaders of all youth organisations within the church, about current principles and practices relating to child protection issues;
- To facilitate training regarding any changes to or updates in Children (NI) Order 1995;
- To facilitate a police check to be done on all youth workers within the church and also on those within the church who appoint others to the role of leader or helper in a youth organisation;
- To listen to any concern that a worker has regarding a particular child and to make a decision as to whether or not Social Services should be contacted;
- To listen to any grievances that a child may have and to take appropriate measures;
- To monitor the application of the policy and procedures, as outlined in this document;
- To review the policy and procedures at regular intervals.

What it's NOT:

- Health and Safety Officer
- First Aider
- Overall leader of all youth work within the church
- The person who has overall responsibility for the safety and protection of children whilst participating in any youth activity within the church: **this remains the responsibility of the leaders in charge and that of the appropriate designated helpers.**

Leaders

It is the role and responsibility of the leader/s in charge of each organisation to ensure that:

- the guidelines within the Child Protection Policy of Ballyclare Baptist Church are adhered to at all times; the designated person for Child Protection is informed of any new workers within their youth ministry and to ensure that new workers are informed about the church's policy on child protection
 - new applicants should go through the church's recruitment and selection procedure as detailed in the **Recruitment and Selection** section of this document
- a **Children's Information and Parental Consent** form is completed for every child attending their respective activity
 - the leader in charge should be able to access these forms whenever necessary and he/she is responsible for ensuring that the forms are stored in a secure location. (In the case of the leader in charge being absent from an activity, at least one other helper should be able to access the relevant information forms.)
- a register is kept of each child's attendance
- an **accident report** form (book located in church kitchen) or an **incident report** form, whichever is appropriate, is completed whenever necessary. (A copy of these forms should be given to the Child Protection coordinator for their information. The leader in charge should also keep a copy. Both of these forms should be stored in a secure location and for no less than 21 years.)
 - in the event of an accident or an incident taking place somewhere other than on church premises then an **accident report** form should be completed (see booklet of church forms)
 - it is advised that an accident or incident report form should be completed as soon as possible after an accident or incident has occurred
- a **risk assessment** is carried out on a frequent basis, and on every occasion when an external trip is to take place (please refer to the following section on 'Residential: **Risk Analysis**').
- the safety of all children is paramount whilst in their care, particularly on **arrival to** and on **leaving from** an activity within the church;
 - it is advised that the leader in charge and a sufficient number of leaders/helpers are available at least 15 minutes before the activity is due to begin and that the leader in charge and a sufficient number of leaders/helpers are also available to wait until all children have left the premises.
 - in the case of children moving from one church activity to another within the church e.g. Sunday School to morning service, then it is paramount that adequate supervision is available at this time.

- one leader is never alone with a group of children or an individual child. Where this is necessary e.g. when a Sunday School teacher is teaching a class, then the class should be in public view, either in an open area of the church, or visible through a glass door panel or window. If this is not possible, then an 'open door' policy is strongly recommended e.g. the door of the room will remain open while the lesson is in progress.

Helpers

- To assist the leader/s in the execution of all aspects pertaining to their role (see previous section).

Recruitment and Selection

It is the intention of the fellowship to operate proper recruitment and selection procedures for all who apply to work in a voluntary capacity within the church. Sample forms can be found in the appendices section.

The recruitment and selection procedures are as follows:

Youth Leaders

- Job Description.** The prospective leader in charge should be given a description of the role he/she will be expected to fulfil. This should be done by the church oversight, in consultation with the outgoing youth leader (if appropriate).
- Application Form.** The applicant will complete this form. The names and addresses of two referees must be provided.
- Declaration Form.** The applicant will sign this form confirming that he/she has never been convicted of an offence in connection with children.
- Identification.** The applicant will be asked to provide two original forms of identification, one of which must be photographic, e.g. a current driving licence, a passport or birth certificate. (A copy of each form of identification must be kept for church records.)
- References.** Written and/or oral references will be verified.
- Police Check.** A police check will be made to ensure the applicant has no convictions that would disqualify him/her from working with children.

After successfully completing this process, the applicant may be accepted to take on the role of youth leader within the church, and subject to satisfactory reports he/she may be offered a position of responsibility within the fellowship.

Youth Helpers

The following steps will be followed in recruiting volunteers.

- a. Job Description. The prospective volunteer will be given a description of the role he/she is expected to fulfil. This will be given verbally and/or in written form by the leader in charge of the respective youth organisation.
- b. Please refer to steps **b** to **f** above.

After successfully completing this process, the applicant may be accepted to take on the role of youth helper within the church.

****We recognise the necessity of carrying out a police check on those within the church who have the responsibility of appointing anyone to a position of youth work within the church.***



Principles of Good Practice

Equal Opportunities

Ballyclare Baptist Church believe that all children and workers should be treated with respect, regardless of gender, age, colour etc.

All reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that any child or worker with a special need and/or disability will be accommodated.

Youth Leaders and Helpers

The youth leaders are to make the children aware that they are available to help them, and how the children and leaders/helpers are to behave during a church activity, and what the children are to do in event of a fire.

The leaders and helpers are expected to follow the Ballyclare Baptist Church Code of Behaviour. This is in place to protect everyone involved in the organisation.

When transporting children/young people to and from a church activity or other event, the leader/helpers should ensure that they have appropriate motor insurance cover and try to avoid being alone with a child in a car.

When it is necessary to transport children using the church minibus or in a leader/helper's car, children should wear their seatbelts and behaviour should be conducive to a safe journey for all. Whenever a child puts at risk the safety of others e.g. whilst travelling on the minibus, the child's parents should be informed and the parents should take responsibility for making their own travel arrangements for their child.

5-Day Clubs

The area should be visited beforehand, informing parents of your intentions. Always hold the meeting and counsel children in the open where parents can see you. Children should be made aware of the availability of the leaders to help them and the behaviour expected of them. Always hold the club in a place where leaders and children will be safe. If this is a Church organised outreach, determine whose policy and insurance will be in operation.

Holiday Bible Clubs (HBC)

Invitations with consent forms should be distributed, explaining the time and place of the HBC. It is important that the programme is well organised and that the children are well supervised. Adequate helpers are required. A ratio of 1 adult to 8 children is reasonable but it would be better to have a lower ratio e.g. 1 to 6.

The leaders are to make the children aware that they are available to help them, and how the children and leaders are to behave in club. If children come to be counselled this should be done as openly as possible.

An attendance register and an accident/incident book should be kept. It would be advisable to have a first aid kit available and Fire Safety precautions should be drawn to the attention of the children at the beginning of the club.

Residentials

1. **Risk analysis.** The leader in charge, together with another responsible adult, should conduct a risk analysis of any outdoor centre before taking a group of children and/or young people, (**even if the centre/venue has been used previously** as centre leaders and facilities can change from one year to the next). There are three key questions to have in mind when conducting a risk analysis:
 - ***What are the risks?***
 - ***Who is most at risk?***
 - ***How can we minimise the risks from becoming hazardous events?***

All attempts to minimise risks should be taken. If it is deemed, by the leader in charge, that some risks cannot be minimised and could therefore become hazardous events then the centre should **NOT** be used under any circumstances and/or the activity in question should be omitted from the programme.

2. **Parents' Meeting.** A parents' meeting should be held to discuss all aspects of the residential programme and consent forms should be distributed.
3. **Recruitment Procedures.** The recruitment procedures for all counsellors/helpers should be followed closely.
4. **Preparation Meeting.** All workers should endeavour to attend a preparation meeting when individual responsibilities will be allocated and refresher training in Child Protection procedures will be given, this should be organised by the leader in charge.

When running a residential, it is important that:

- Supervision is adequate at **all** times, including any free time children may have, and that all activities have been well planned;
- Children and counsellors/helpers are aware of the Fire Safety procedures and a Fire Drill is carried out;
- The children are aware of their rights and the behaviour expected of them;
- If a child is being counselled individually this should be done as openly as possible;
- Incident/accident report forms are available for use.
 - The residential centre should have a report book for accidents. A copy of this should be taken and given to the Child Protection coordinator within 7 days. Incidents should be recorded on an Incident Report form, a copy of this form should also be given to CP coordinator on return;
- A First Aid kit should be carried at all times.

Children must be told their rights

Children must be told their rights, especially in relation to their involvement with Ballyclare Baptist Church. This should be done by the leader in charge, no less than once per year. The following are the rights, which we should share in our youth activities:

- You have the right to be safe and so we ask you to obey the rules, which are there for your safety;
- You have the right to be protected from any harm. Please tell me if you feel, or have been, threatened or abused. I will listen and try to do something about it;
- You have the right to healthcare; therefore we need to know if you suffer from any illnesses. Parents should inform leaders on the relevant information form;
- You have the right to enjoy and practise your own religion, but as you know during our church activity you are expected to listen to Christian views. You have the right afterwards to discuss what you have heard with your teacher without fear of prejudice;
- You have the right to be treated with dignity but you are expected to behave in a respectful way and to treat others in the same way with dignity and respect;
- You have the right to express your opinions. We would encourage you to do so at a time, which is suitable to all involved. This can easily be arranged with your teacher/leader.

Procedure for dealing with an allegation against a full-time worker or volunteer

In the event of an allegation against a youth leader/helper the following procedures will be followed:

Suspension

The first priority must be to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. After consultation with Social Services or police, the leader/helper should be informed of the nature of the allegation and should be suspended from their position. They will have the opportunity to respond to the allegation and their response should be recorded along with the record of the incident. The designated person for Child Protection (the Child Protection coordinator) may carry out this action. The statutory authorities will decide whether the report indicates that significant harm has occurred and whether further legal action will be instigated.

Report to statutory authorities

A report will be forwarded to Social Services or the police, including the leader's/helper's response to the allegation, according to the standard procedures.

Inform parents/carers

Parents/carers should be informed immediately, after taking advice from statutory authorities as to how this might best be done. It is very important to maintain close links with the statutory authorities in order to ensure that no actions taken by the organisation might undermine any formal investigations.

Support for leader/helper

While recognising that the safety of children and young people is of paramount importance, it is equally important to support leaders and helpers against whom allegations have been made. Support needs to be provided appropriately in consultation with statutory services.

Internal disciplinary procedures

Ballyclare Baptist Church will also carry out its own disciplinary procedures. The fellowship will have to make decisions and take appropriate action based on facts as presented. If the outcome of these procedures is dismissal from the position, DHSS&PS should be informed so that the person's name can be considered for the POC (VA) register.

Contacts

BALLYCLARE BAPTIST CHURCH contacts

If you have any queries regarding the policy, or if you are in any way unsure as to what action to take in a given situation, please contact one of the following workers:

Safeguarding Coordinator:	Carol Weatherall	07721 680043
Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator	Heather Causby	07584410624

Useful contacts

Volunteer Now
The Skainos Centre
239, Newtownards Road
BELFAST BT4 1AF
Tel: 028 9023 2020

Children in Northern Ireland
Unit 9 40, Montgomery Road
BELFAST BT6 9HL
Tel: 028 9040 1290

NSPCC
Child Protection Helpline
24 hours, call free
Tel: 0800 800500

Kidscape
8-10 South Street
Epsom, Surrey
KT18 7PF
info@kidscape.org.uk

Ballyclare Baptist Church does not necessarily agree with all the activities of the above organisation. Ballyclare Baptist Church wish to acknowledge that the content of this policy is based on the advice and guidance as detailed in the Child Evangelism Fellowship® of Ireland (CEF) policy statement for Child Protection (2003), the Volunteer Development Agency and the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) Youth Service.

Ballyclare Baptist Church

Positive Behaviour Policy



Aims

- To enable all children, youth workers and parents to work together towards reducing the incidence of bullying within the church.
- To encourage an environment in which all children have the right to feel safe and happy and to be protected whenever they feel vulnerable.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is any repetitive behaviour that makes anyone feel threatened or uncomfortable.

In Ballyclare Baptist Church bullying is described as:

Physical hitting, kicking, taking money or belongings

Verbal name calling, taunting, threats, insulting family members, blaming people for things they didn't do, saying unkind things

Emotional excluding, spreading rumours, laughing and making fun of others

Gestural making gestures about someone in a way that makes them feel unwanted and different e.g. someone holding their nose as another goes past

Written writing or sending unkind notes

Value Statement

At Ballyclare Baptist Church we strive to provide an open, secure and happy environment in which everyone feels respected and valued. Youth workers, children and parents should feel able to express their concerns openly, confident that they will be listened to and taken seriously.

Strategies for Preventative Action

- Raising awareness of all members of the church community so that they are aware of our anti-bullying policy
- Working together to reduce bullying by observing relationships and dealing with incidents early

What we do if someone feels that they have been bullied:

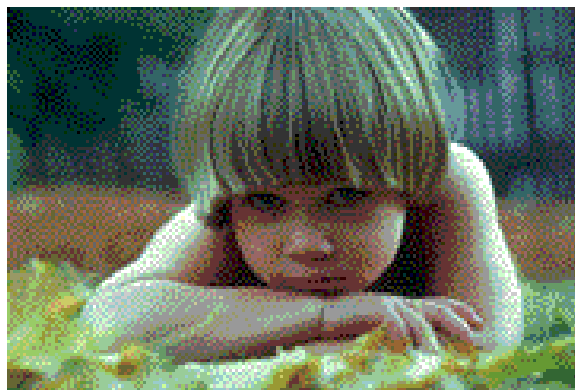
It is important that we create an atmosphere in the church where children who are being bullied, or others who know about it, feel that they will be listened to and believed and that they are assured that swift, sensitive action will be taken.

- Children
 - The child should report any incident of bullying to the leader in charge and or the Child Protection coordinator: Carol Weatherall
- Parents
 - If you think your child is being bullied, or if they tell you that they are, please tell us straight away. If your child tells us, or if we discover that they are being bullied, or if they are bullying others, we will deal with the matter; and in the more serious cases we will contact you and discuss together how this situation can be improved.
- Youth workers
 - All youth workers will record all reported incidents of bullying in writing; the youth activity leader should keep a record of these incidents in a secure place marked CONFIDENTIAL.
 - All victims must be reassured that the matter will be addressed.

- As our church adopts a 'no blame' approach to bullying, we should encourage the 'bully' to be aware of the impact of his behaviour on the victim and to take responsibility for rectifying the situation.

“Whatever their own inadequacy or difficulty, it is not their fault and it is not their responsibility to stop it. It is our responsibility and we must give them that message loud and clear if we are not to compound their unhappiness.”

Extract from ‘Changing the Victim’



Ballyclare Baptist Church

Rashee Road

Ballyclare

Co. Antrim

