



City Church Dublin
Child Safeguarding Appendices

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City Church Dublin

Anti-Bullying Policy

City Church Dublin is committed to providing a caring, supportive and friendly environment where children learn to value and respect each other and are challenged to reach their full potential through active participation. City Church will not tolerate bullying by anyone in any of its activities.

What is bullying?

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression - whether it is verbal, psychological or physical - that is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly among children in social environments such as schools. It includes behaviours such as physical aggression, cyber bullying, damage to property, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, name calling, malicious gossip and extortion. Bullying can also take the form of abuse based on gender identity, sexual preference, race, ethnicity and religious factors. With developments in modern technology, children can also be the victims of non-contact bullying, via mobile phones, the internet and other personal devices.

It is recognised that bullying affects the lives of an increasing number of children and can be the cause of genuine concerns about a child's welfare.

While bullying can happen to any child, some may be more vulnerable, such as those who are, or are perceived to be, in a minority or considered different from other children.

There can be an increased vulnerability to bullying among children with special educational needs. This is particularly so among those who do not understand social cues and/or have difficulty communicating. Some children with complex needs may lack understanding of social situations and therefore trust everyone implicitly. Such children may be more vulnerable because they do not have the same social skills or capacity as others to recognise and defend themselves against bullying behaviour.

Preventative Strategies

Elders /staff /volunteers should promote a positive anti-bullying ethos in their activities, raise awareness amongst elders /staff /volunteers and children that bullying will not be tolerated and that anyone who witnesses an incident of bullying has a responsibility to report it. By emphasising the children's Code of Behaviour (rules for the group developed annually with the children), elders /staff /volunteers should create an environment in which children are valued as individuals and are encouraged and affirmed. (See Part 4 of *Safeguarding Trust*).

What can elders /staff /volunteers do if a child tells them they are being bullied?

- Listen calmly and accept what is said.

- Complete an *Incident form* following the conversation and keep on file as this forms the basis of the bullying report. Notes should include nature of incident, date, time, location, names of those involved, witnesses, relevant history and child's response.
- Reassure them that help is available, action will be taken, the child was right to tell, it is not their fault and it could happen to anyone.
- Negotiate confidentiality – be clear you'll only tell people who need to know but that you cannot guarantee confidentiality or secrecy.
- Ensure the child's safety. The elders /staff /volunteers should be aware that the safety of the child is paramount, and this can be maintained through appropriate supervision. Liaise with the parents/guardians in relation to a solution and possible actions.
- Tell the child that you will keep them informed and how you intend to proceed.
- Respond to the incident – all actions should be guided by the needs of the child. Decide what action to take and by whom.
- Make a record of facts rather than opinions. Include details from the bullying report, details recounted by others involved, any agreements made, an account of action taken and suggestions for follow up and monitoring. This should be retained by the Safeguarding Panel.

Responding to incidents of bullying

There are a number of approaches which can be used, and the elders /staff /volunteers should determine which action to take depending on the incident of bullying.

1. The children's Code of Behaviour sets out the guidelines for children regarding boundaries and appropriate behaviour. Draw everyone's attention back to the Code of Behaviour and the consequences of not abiding by the Code.
2. The 'no blame' approach does not concentrate on who did what to whom but instead, focusing on the feelings of the target and what the group involved in the bullying and the target can do to make this situation better. The 'no blame' approach allows the group involved in the bullying behaviour to think about the action that has taken place and the effect it has had on the target. It promotes the perpetrator and the rest of the group involved in the bullying behaviour with an opportunity to redeem themselves.
3. Time Out – by providing some space and time between the perpetrator and target and allowing both parties involved to think about the incident that has taken place, time apart may aid the process of resolving the bullying e.g. removal of the perpetrator away from the target to another group.
4. Denial of privileges – loss of certain privileges by the perpetrator in the group. It is hoped that by using this response the perpetrator may realise the impact of their actions on the target and the consequences for themselves.
5. Parental/Guardian involvement – make parents/guardians of all children involved aware of the incident of bullying and ask them to intervene in the situation.
6. Suspension or expulsion of the perpetrator may be used as a last resort in bullying where no other interventions have worked.
7. Disciplinary procedures must be applied in relation to any sanctioning of the perpetrator and advice should be sought in relation to the adoption of such procedures, where appropriate.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is defined as “any behaviour performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others”.

Cyberbullying, similar to more traditional forms of bullying, must meet three main criteria:

- Intention to cause harm to the victim(s)
- Repetition of abusive behaviour(s) over time (however in some instances, one behavioural act can create an on-going sense of intimidation for the victim (e.g. posting a humiliating photo/video which can be viewed by a large audience can have long term effects)).
- Imbalance of power between victim(s) and bully/bullies (i.e. super technological skills, anonymity).
- Cyberbullying differs from more traditional forms of bullying in a number of ways:
 - The audience is larger;
 - There are no time or location barriers;
 - It can happen 24/7
 - The target’s reaction is not often seen, leading to a reduction in feelings of empathy or guilt for the perpetrator.

What are the signs/symptoms that someone is being cyberbullied?

Some signs or symptoms that may present when a child is experiencing cyberbullying include:

- More frequent health problems – headaches, stomach aches, frequent absenteeism, sleep problems, depression, or suicidal thoughts;
- Behavioural and emotional changes – distressed, anxious, frustrated, fearful, angry;
- School-related changes – inability to concentrate, drop in academic performance, reluctance to attend school;
- Negative emotional expressions after use of social media – poor self-image, sadness, hopelessness, loneliness, suspicion of others;
- Changes in online behaviour – more careful or cautious approaches to communicating online;
- Being emotionally upset during or after using the internet or the phone;
- Being very secretive or protective of their digital life;
- Wanting to stop using the computer or mobile phone;
- Being nervous or jumpy when getting an instant message, text, or email;
- Avoiding discussions about computer or mobile phone activities;
- Physical symptoms such as self-harm, eating disorders and/or risky behaviours.

Actions elders /staff /volunteers should consider when a child is the target of cyberbullying:

- Confirm that you are dealing with bullying behaviour.
- Listen calmly and uncritically to the report the child is making.
- Remind the child that it is not their fault; it is the person who is doing the bullying that has the problem.

- Tell the child not to respond to the bully as this can exacerbate the issue.
- Ask the child if they have talked to their parents about the cyberbullying, if they have not the elder /staff member /volunteer should offer to help the child to talk to their parents about the problem.

The following advice should be given by the elder /staff member /volunteer to the parents of the child experiencing the cyberbullying:

- Keep a copy of all correspondence between the child and the bully.
- Encourage the child to remove the cyberbully as a 'friend' online and block them from his/her phone.
- Report the issue to the website and/or mobile phone company as appropriate.
- Serious issues may require to be reported to An Garda Síochána – issues requiring investigation by An Garda Síochána may include the making of inappropriate sexual suggestions, racist remarks or persistent bullying that is seriously damaging to the child's wellbeing. In such situations the elder /staff member /volunteer should report their concerns to the Safeguarding Panel who can assist them to inform parents that they should report the cyber bullying or sexting to the Gardaí by bringing the child's phone to the local Garda station and making a report.

City Church Dublin

Communications Policy

This Communication Policy is for all those involved in children's activities at City Church Dublin. It deals with communication within City Church and with parents and children and the wider community. To contribute to ensuring inclusivity and co-operation this policy emphasises maintaining and improving the current channels of communication amongst those involved in City Church and with the general public.

Good communication is essential to maintaining a positive working and learning environment. Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect in a happy, caring and supportive environment means that people feel included, consulted and informed. This requires that City Church uses a variety of channels of communication so as to ensure that the relevant people receive the necessary information.

Means of communication:

This policy encourages the use of the most effective communications mechanism depending on context, whilst ensuring the rights of everyone involved in the communication.

Communication methods utilised:

- Personal contact
- Phone calls
- Written communication (email, letters, notes)
- Text messages including Whatsapp
- Social media
- Website

Communications Procedures:

Our communication strategy is based on a module of Display, Inform, and Ask to ensure that relevant information is available to parents/guardians, children and the wider community. We shall use the above communication methods to ensure that this module is achieved.

We shall ensure that the following is displayed and publicly available on the City Church website:

- General information about City Church activities.
- Contact details for relevant personnel.
- Child Safeguarding Statement and contact details for relevant person.
- *Safeguarding Trust* Policy and contact details for our Safeguarding Panel (giving a generic church e-mail address to minimise personal spam)
- Other supporting policies and procedures that underpin the work of City Church.

We shall ensure that the following is displayed on our church premises:

- Child Safeguarding Statement and contact details for the relevant person.
- Safeguarding Panel notice, including contact details for each panel member.
- Children's information poster with photos of panel members.
- Details of children's activities.
- Details of our church website.

We shall ensure that we inform parents about the following:

- Introduce the elders, staff members and volunteers that will be working with their children.
- Who their first point of contact should be within their child's group.
- General information about the activity their child is participating in.
- Calendar of events.
- Details of activities, trips and outing.
- Code of Behaviour for their child's group and the sanctions for breaching that Code.
- *Safeguarding Trust* and supporting policies through information leaflets.
- How to make a complaint.
- Any concerns elders, staff members or volunteers have about their child's welfare and safety provided it does not further endanger the child, elders, staff, volunteers or panel members.

We shall ensure that we inform children about the following:

- Upcoming activities.
- Their rights to be protected, listened to and to have their views taken into consideration.
- *Safeguarding Trust* through information leaflets and posters.
- The Code of Behaviour that applies to them and the sanctions for breaching that Code of Behaviour.

We shall provide the family of all children joining one of our church groups with:

- Programme of activities
- Safeguarding information for parents and children over 10 years
- details regarding the meeting times and arrangements for dropping off and picking up children;
- contact details for elders, staff or volunteers;
- membership/registration form for submitting child's personal details/medical information/emergency contact numbers/consent authorisation;
- photographic policy/consent authorisation;
- Code of behaviour for members for your group and sanctions for breaching the Code;
- details of where to access of relevant policies and Child Safeguarding Statement or copies of same.

We shall ask parents or guardians to:

- Complete a Membership Registration form for their child annually providing child's personal details, medical information, emergency contact number, consent authorisation.
- Complete consent forms for photographs, outings etc as necessary.
- Ensure that consents are provided by those with parental/ guardian responsibility.
- Keep elders, staff and volunteers informed about relevant information in relation to their child and family during the year.
- Confirm that the information being provided to them is being received and understood.
- Check in with elders, staff and volunteers for feedback on how their child is doing.
- Provide feedback to elders, staff and volunteers on what we are doing well and how we can improve or change to benefit parents and members of our groups.

We shall ask children to:

- Check that the information we are providing them with is being received and understood.
- Talk to elders, staff and volunteers about any concerns that they might have.
- Feel free to approach any elders, staff or volunteers if they are worried about something.
- Provide feedback to elders, staff and volunteers on what they are doing well and how they can improve within our groups.

All information provided by parents/guardians and children as part of this Communications Policy shall be treated with the utmost confidentiality. However, if any information pertaining to a child's welfare and safety comes to an elder, staff member or volunteer's attention through any of these means of communication, they shall follow the relevant procedures laid out in *Safeguarding Trust*.

City Church Dublin

Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures

City Church Dublin is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of all members. We also try to ensure that children have a positive and enjoyable experience when participating in City Church activities.

This complaints procedure aims to cover any situation which may arise, when children or their parents/guardians are not happy with the way children were treated while they were at an activity run by City Church.

The following are examples of the types of complaints that may arise:

- An alleged breach of the leaders' Code of Behaviour by a staff member or volunteer (see Part 4 of *Safeguarding Trust*);
- Perceived poor attitude of a staff member or volunteer;
- A child feeling unhappy about an incident or an event;
- A parent/guardian feeling unhappy about an incident or event involving their child;
- Dissatisfaction in relation to an aspect of the service being provided.

What Complaints are accepted?

- Complaints involving child protection concerns must be dealt with in accordance with reporting procedures as set out in *Safeguarding Trust* and not through this Complaints procedure.
- The Complaints procedure below should not be used to disagree with a policy set by City Church.

There are basic rules for the acceptance of complaints:

- Complaints must be raised within three months of the Complainant knowing the facts (City Church will not deal with complaints that are older).
- City Church does not generally investigate anonymous complaints.
- Complaints that are broadly or substantively the same as a previous complaint, which have already been addressed, will not be accepted.
- City Church will refuse any complaints which are believed to be vexatious or malicious.

Who can make a complaint?

- Children who are members of children's activities organised by City Church.
- Their parents/guardians.
- Staff members or volunteers in City Church.
- Other advocates on behalf of children.

How to make a complaint

1. If the complaint is in relation to the safety and welfare of children, the complaints should be made to the City Church Safeguarding Panel.
2. Other complaints should be made to the Families Worker overseeing the children's ministry at City Church, with whom you should raise the concern orally (informal complaint).
3. If the complainant does not want to discuss the matter with the Families Worker, if the Families Worker cannot answer the complainant's concern, if the complainant is dissatisfied with the initial response of the Families Worker to a complaint, or if the complaint is more serious, the complaint can be made in writing to the Safeguarding Panel (formal complaint).

Information the Complainant needs to provide

Complaints should be made, in the first instance, orally to the Families Worker and provide them with the following information to allow them to investigate the complaint:

- Name of child affected and the group or event they were involved in
- If the complaint is being made by a parent or guardian, the name and address of the parent/guardian
- Exactly what the complainant is dissatisfied with and identification of the person(s) against whom the complaint is made
- The name of the staff member/volunteer who dealt with the matter the complainant is dissatisfied with.

Complaints made in writing should be made on the *Complaints Form*, giving as many factual details as possible to allow the matter to be investigated.

If I make a Complaint how will my Complaint be dealt with?

Your complaint will be dealt with fairly and objectively. City Church's policy is to deal with any valid complaints in a positive and pro-active manner and expect resolutions and outcomes to contribute to a process of continuous improvement.

Informal complaint

The Families Worker will likely need to speak to a number of other people about your complaint but will endeavour to be able to provide a response to your informal complaint within ten days. If the Families Worker is unable to respond to your informal complaint substantively within this time frame, they will endeavour to revert to you to update you on the situation.

Formal complaint

It may take time to process a complaint; however, you will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint with an acknowledgement of a formal complaint within seven days and endeavours will be made to provide a response to the complaint within four weeks. However, where it is not

possible to respond to the complaint within four weeks, you will be provided with an update within that period and the matter resolved at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Families Worker or Safeguarding Panel member may need to speak to you and a number of other people to fully understand your complaint and the circumstances surrounding it. Ultimately the Families Worker or panel member will decide about the Complaint and will inform you whether your complaint is upheld or not and the actions that will be taken as a result.

Actions that may be taken in response to the investigation of a complaint:

Responses to a complaint might include:

- An apology (either verbal or written) to the complainant and/or the member;
- An explanation provided to the complainant and/or member, e.g. as to why something happened;
- A review of a decision made;
- An assurance that any poor practice identified in the investigation will be addressed at future activities;
- A meeting with the staff member/volunteer (who is the subject of the complaint) and the complainant in order to resolve the situation;
- Compulsory attendance by staff member/volunteer at specific training event;
- A period of supervision of staff member/volunteer by other staff/volunteers;
- In the case of a serious incident the suspension or dismissal of staff / volunteer (in line with disciplinary procedures – see below).

This list is not exhaustive and in the individual circumstances of a specific complaint the response to that complaint may include one or more of the above items or may not include any of them.

What if I am not satisfied with the outcome of my Complaint?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your Complaint or the way in which it was handled, then you may appeal. Any appeal must be made within 21 days of being given the decision and outcomes of your Complaint.

Your appeal must be formally lodged in writing to the Safeguarding Panel. In your appeal, you must clearly explain the basis on which you are making the appeal and your preferred outcome to resolve the issue.

The Panel will consider the process undertaken to handle the original complaint and the outcome of the original complaint. You will be kept informed of the progress of your appeal with an acknowledgement of your appeal within seven days and a response within four weeks. Where it is not possible to complete the appeal within four weeks, you will be provided with an update within that period and the matter resolved at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Panel may need to speak to you and a number of other people to fully understand your appeal and the circumstances surrounding the investigation of your complaint.

The Panel will make a decision about the appeal and will inform you whether your appeal is upheld or not and the actions that will be taken as a result.

Disciplinary procedures if volunteer is found in breach of the Code of Behaviour

Each breach of the leaders' Code of Behaviour will be assessed in line with the Complaints procedure above. If a volunteer is deemed to be in breach of the Code of Behaviour the following procedures should be followed:

Informal Process Stage:

At this early stage, the main aim of the procedure is to help the volunteer achieve the required standard of performance or behaviour. It should be City Church's aim to be able to (where possible) resolve issues at this stage and not invoke any formal procedures.

However, depending on the nature of the matter it is up to the Safeguarding Panel to decide whether or not to initiate this procedure. It can be in the form of a supervision meeting and the Panel will:

- Informally meet with the volunteer to discuss with them the unacceptable behaviour or underperformance.
- Agree on improvement measures and the timeframe for these improvements.
- Offer to support and coach the volunteer in improving their performance.
- Decide on a date to review the progress.
- Inform the volunteer in a clear manner of the next steps in the procedure if agreed standards of improvement are not achieved.
- Maintain a record of the meetings held.

Formal Process Stage:

This disciplinary procedure allows for warnings to be given for failure to meet standards of Code of Behaviour where the matter cannot be dealt with at the informal process stage.

Disciplinary meetings:

Disciplinary meetings will be held with the volunteer so that the volunteer can respond. The Safeguarding Panel will never give a warning or decide on the level of a warning until after this meeting takes place and the volunteer is given a fair hearing under the principles of natural justice. The meeting will always be adjourned, and all aspects considered before a discipline or warning is imposed. A discipline/ warning may not be imposed if the volunteer's response is satisfactory.

Stage One – Verbal Warning:

The Panel will convene a disciplinary meeting. The volunteer will be given the opportunity to state their case. The meeting will be adjourned to decide what course of action will be taken, the volunteer and their representative will be asked to re-join the meeting and they will be informed of the decision. The verbal warning should be given by the Panel (more than one panel member should be present for this). The Panel will inform the volunteer:

1. What the issue/matter is
2. What action or improvement is required from the volunteer
3. Set a date for review meeting
4. What will happen if there is no improvement made by the volunteer

The verbal warning will be issued verbally and in writing and in duplicate, a copy of which the volunteer will be asked to sign. This should be returned to the Panel. This verbal warning remains active for a period of 6 (six) months. All warnings issued can be appealed, please see below for the appeals process.

Stage Two– Written Warning:

If the matter is not resolved at stage one stage two is initiated. The same process as stage one is applied however the warning is in writing and remains active for a period of 12 (twelve) months.

Stage Three – Final Written Warning:

If the matter is not resolved at stage two, stage three is initiated. The same process as stage two is applied.

Stage Four – Removal from Volunteer Role:

If there are further breaches of discipline after the third stage or if an incident is so serious that the matter cannot be dealt with at stages 2 or 3, then the Panel may decide to remove the volunteer from their role. The process for dismissal is:

1. An appropriate investigation and consideration by the Panel
2. A meeting with the Panel, the volunteer and their representative in order to dismiss the volunteer
3. Outline the City Church position to the volunteer
4. Consideration to be given by the Panel to the volunteer and their representative's position.

The dismissal will be issued in writing and will include information on the appeals process.

Volunteers' Rights:

At each stage of the disciplinary procedure, volunteers have the right:

- To be informed of the complaint against them and be given sufficient opportunity to present their case and call witnesses to support their case, as appropriate.

- To be accompanied to disciplinary meetings by a representative (this can be in the form of a colleague or friend)
- To be given an opportunity to present their case before a decision regarding the discipline to be imposed is reached.
- To normally not be removed from role for a first offence, other than gross misconduct.
- To be informed and encouraged to use the right of appeal.

Appeals Process:

An appeal should be made by the volunteer to the church pastor in writing within two weeks of the disciplinary action been taken.

An appeals panel will be set up to investigate the appeal. The appeals panel will consist of members from the elder board. The person hearing the appeal should not have a previous knowledge of the matter.

A meeting will take place within two weeks of the application to appeal the disciplinary decision. The outcome of the appeals process will be issued to the volunteer in writing within one week.

If a serious allegation of abuse is made against a volunteer, the City Church Safeguarding Panel will follow the procedures for dealing with an allegation against a volunteer as contained in Part 7 of *Safeguarding Trust*.

Disciplinary procedures if a staff member is found in breach of Code of Behaviour

Each breach of the Code of Behaviour will be assessed in line with the complaints procedure outline above. If a staff member is deemed to be in breach of the Code of Behaviour the disciplinary procedures in the staff member's contract shall be followed where it is a serious incident which may potentially warrant suspension or dismissal of the staff member.

City Church Dublin

Complaints Form

(PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS)

YOUR NAME, ADDRESS & CONTACT NUMBER

DATE ON WHICH THE ALLEGED INCIDENT HAPPENED

LOCATION OF ALLEGED INCIDENT:

NATURE OF COMPLAINT: *(E.G. Harassment, Bullying etc.)*

NAME OF PARTY OR PARTIES INVOLVED:

City Church Dublin

Volunteer Grievance Procedures

City Church Dublin is committed to providing a safe and happy work environment for volunteers. This grievance procedure aims to deal in a fair, prompt and impartial manner with the grievances of individual volunteers in relation to their role or duties.

Most difficulties can be dealt with through City Church's normal channels of communication. Where this is not possible, the purpose of this grievance procedures is to provide for the orderly resolution of the issues in a fair and open way.

Informal discussions

If a volunteer has any grievance about their volunteering or a colleague they should discuss it informally, as soon as possible, with the leader in charge of their group or where they are the leader in charge of the group with the church pastor. Their grievance should be taken seriously, and everything done to try to resolve the issue informally. The majority of concerns are likely to be resolved at this stage.

Formal procedure

If a volunteer feels that the matter has not been resolved through informal discussions, they should put the grievance to the Safeguarding Panel. On receipt of a grievance under this grievance procedure, the Panel will arrange to meet with the volunteer to allow them the opportunity to explain their grievance and share how they would like it to be addressed. The volunteer will have the right to be accompanied by a friend to this meeting. Following this meeting, the Panel will give a written response, not later than ten working days after the meeting, outlining how the grievance will be responded to. If the grievance requires further meetings or investigations, the ten working day limit may be extended. The response will follow this meeting and include a reference to the right of appeal.

If the volunteer feels the issue has still not been resolved satisfactorily, they may appeal to the Irish Church Missions Trustees, whose decision is final. You may be accompanied by a friend at this appeal hearing and you will be afforded the opportunity to explain the basis on which you believe that the Panel's decision was wrong.

In the event that the grievance concerns another employee, the Panel may request that the grievance be made in writing in order that the person who the grievance concerns may have an opportunity fully and fairly to answer any such grievance. Where your grievance concerns another employee, the procedures outlined above may not apply in relation to the investigation of the grievance. In such circumstances, you will be informed in advance of the alternative procedure which will apply.

Grievances procedures for staff

Staff members may raise grievances with their line manager in line with the grievance procedures laid out in their staff contract.

City Church Dublin

Working in Partnership with Parents / Guardians Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Communication Policy.

Working in partnership with parents/ guardians helps to safeguard children. City Church Dublin sees the welfare of children as paramount and therefore seeks to form positive relationships between elders / staff / volunteers and parents to encourage mutual trust and support.

Partnership with parents/guardians and families involves information sharing and consultation regarding all aspects of their child's participation in City Church.

In order to foster positive relationships and a good working partnership between elders /staff /volunteers and parents/guardians, City Church shall:

- Ensure that all elders, staff and volunteers working with their child are introduced to parents/guardians;
- Provide parents/guardians with information on *Safeguarding Trust*;
- Make available to parents, via their website, all relevant policies and procedures;
- Ensure that elders /staff /volunteers make themselves available to talk to parents/guardians informally on a regular basis;
- Allow parents the opportunity to visit their child's activity from time to time;
- Regularly provide information on activities and events both verbally and in writing (including electronic communication);
- Regularly provide feedback to parents on their child's progress and participation.

City Church shall encourage parents to:

- Ask questions about policies and procedures;
- Make suggestions or comments;
- Ask about their child's experiences in the organisation;
- Talk to elders /staff/volunteers about how their child is getting on in activities;
- Keep elders, staff and volunteers informed about family events/situations that may be causing children anxiety;
- Attend events organised by City Church.

It is essential that this working partnership is based on mutual respect and value so that if an occasion arises whereby an elder, staff member or volunteer has a concern about a child, this can be discussed with parents if appropriate.

City Church may seek to speak with parents/guardians if a concern arises about their child or before a report is going to be made to Túsla in line with the *Safeguarding Trust* however, there may be circumstances in which it is not possible or appropriate to do so.

City Church Dublin

Social media / Video conferencing policy

The following is a protocol for the safety and of all involved in video conferencing with young people.

- All communication regarding access and links is via parents, not directly with the young people.
- Parental permission should be obtained prior to any video conferencing.
- Permission from the Safeguarding Panel should be obtained in advance of a new video conferencing initiative.
- Skype / Facetime should not be used as these are social media platforms and as such involve sharing of contact details. The most up to date guidance on security for video conferencing platforms should be followed, including the use of password access where possible.
- The link to the meeting should not be publicly advertised and only disseminated among church contacts or other parents who have given permission for their children to join.
- A record of all those who attended should be kept after each meeting– both of devices which were logged in and of people who were visible or audible during the session (it may be more than one person per device)
- There should be a minimum of two Garda-vetted adults in attendance at each meeting – both an adult co-ordinating the meeting and at least one other adult as part of the call, who has agreed to be in attendance for the duration of the call.
- Every effort should be made to avoid a scenario of an adult and child being the only two within a video call. The ‘waiting room’ feature should be used to admit all young people at the same time and allows the host discretion as to who can attend. The host should end the meeting for all at the same time, rather than encourage participants to leave gradually themselves.
- Private chat facilities should be turned off in advance of the meeting.
- The meeting should not be recorded.
- If any non-Garda vetted adults who are not parents join the call, this ought to be by invitation only and never without the attendance of both Garda-vetted adults.

City Church Dublin

Volunteer Recruitment Procedure

The City Church Safeguarding Panel has assigned to the Families Worker, Sarah Mitchell, the responsibility of inviting individuals to apply for the children's ministry team, based on their appropriateness for the role.

The Families Worker will ensure each of the following steps are carried out, prior to an individual being accepted as a volunteer:

1. Garda vetting clearance, through Irish Church Missions
2. *Volunteer Application Form*
3. *Declaration of Person From Abroad Form*, if applicable
4. Reference checks:
The potential volunteer provides details of 2 references, neither relatives nor church staff members, whom they have known for at least 2 years. The Families Worker emails the referees supplied, asking them to complete reference forms. The Families Worker checks one reference with a phone call.
5. Safeguarding Training:
The volunteer attends a 2 hour safeguarding training course organised by Irish Church Missions, and receives and reads sections 4 and 5 of the *Safeguarding Trust Policy*.
6. Interview:
Following receipt of all forms and completion of training, the Families Worker interviews the potential volunteer, checking if the individual understands the role and answering any of their questions.
7. Approval by the City Church Safeguarding Panel and elder board:
The Families Worker presents to the Panel and elders an individual's suitability for the role, seeking final approval for their acceptance as a children's volunteer. If there is any doubt as to an individual's suitability, their application should be either not approved or deferred.
8. Approval and Declaration:
Suitable volunteers are invited to join the children's ministry team, and asked to sign the *Declaration of Acceptance of Safeguarding Trust form*, declaring they have received training and will act responsibly with the children in their care.

For church staff members:

9. Mandated Person Training:
City Church employees should complete the Túsla [Children First Mandated Person e-learning module](#), submitting their certificate of completion to the Families Worker.

Every year, volunteers should participate in:

- An annual appraisal:
The Families Worker will undertake a review with the volunteer, discussing their general performance and determining any need for further training. Volunteers are asked to complete an *Annual Review Form*, which includes a declaration of any offenses since their latest vetting.

- An annual team meeting:
The annual meeting involves a reminder of safeguarding policies and procedures, including the system for reporting safeguarding concerns, and accident/incident and fire procedures.

Every 3 years, volunteers should redo:

- The Garda vetting process
- Safeguarding Training:
Volunteers should again attend the safeguarding training course and sign the *Declaration of Acceptance of Safeguarding Trust*.
- If church employees: the Túsla Mandated Person training module.

City Church Dublin
Accident / Incident Report Form

Name of person _____

Age _____ Date of birth _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Parent/guardian's name _____

Event/meeting and location _____

Date of event/meeting _____

Details of accident / incident

Names of witnesses _____

Action taken and by whom (details of first-aid, medical or Garda involvement)

I declare that the above to be true in every respect.

Signed _____ Date _____

Position _____

Countersigned _____ Date _____

Signature of parent (if subject of report is a child) _____

*The completed report form should be returned to the Safeguarding Panel
(Dorothy Jones, Mark Smith, Philippa Smith, Peter Thompson)*

City Church Dublin

Child Safeguarding Internal Report Form

To be used by either an elder, staff member, volunteer or a panel member

You may not be able to complete all of the fields in this form and not all sections will be relevant to a particular concern.

NB. An elder /staff member /volunteer should, in the first instance, report to a panel member who will report to a statutory agency.

Name of child	
Age	Date of Birth
Address and phone number	
Names of parents / carers	
Address if different from above	
What is the nature of the concern?	
If a child has made a disclosure of abuse, state the name of the person he/she spoke to with the date, time and place	

If a child has made a disclosure of abuse, record as precisely as possible what the child actually said

If an adult has expressed concern in relation to the safety of a child, record if he/she is expressing his/her own worries or passing on those from another adult. Record the concerns and ask him/her to confirm that the details as written are correct.

Have possible signs or indicators of harm been identified? YES/NO
If yes, please outline below

Record the name(s) of the person(s) alleged to have harmed the child:

Signed

Date

FOR PANEL USE ONLY

Report received by:

Signed

Date