

# *Parish of the Assumption, Booterstown*



## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**Version 2: Updated March 2011**

# Contents Page

Section 1.	Parish Vision	3
Section 2.	Policy Statement and Implementation	4
Section 3.	Parish Child Protection Committee	6
Section 4.	Child Protection Policy and Procedures	
	Guiding Principles	7
	Key Directives	8
	Dealing with Disclosure by a Child or Young Person	8
	Reporting Procedure in Respect of a Child or Young Person	10
	The Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians	10
	Codes of Behaviour	11
	Reporting of an Allegation, Complaint or Concern	14
	Publication of the Child Protection Policy	15
Section 5.	Parish Best Practise Approach	16

## **Appendices**

A	List of Parish Groups and Other Contacts
B	Youth Application and Parental Consent Form
C	Volunteer Application Form
D	Template for Interviewing Volunteers
E	Incident/Accident Report Form – Young Person
F.	Incident/Accident Report Form – Adult Allegation
G.	Bi-Annual Check List
H.	Attendance Form

## **1. PARISH VISION**

The Parish vision is to bring the people of God to eternal life:

- Through the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- By means of worship, example, witness, formation and caring.
- Through Christian spirituality, by contributing to the creation of a sense of community with the Parish, and promoting peace and cooperation in the wider community. Our ideal parish will facilitate the achievement of this vision.

## **2. POLICY STATEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION - CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

### **Background**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to set out the principles that will be observed in the Parish of the Assumption, Booterstown for the purpose of securing the safety and protection of all children and young people participating in Parish activities.

The Policy applies to all persons including priests, religious, employees and volunteers working for or in association with the Parish.

### **Guiding Documents**

The policy is based on the following publications:

“Our Children, Our Church – Child Protection Policies and Procedures for the Catholic Church in Ireland” (Prepared by the Irish Bishops’ Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union 2005).

“Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children” (Published by the Department of Health & Children 1999).

“Our Duty to Care” (Department of Health & Children 2002)

“Code of Good Practice – Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector” (Department of Education & Science 2003)

# **POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION**

## **Policy Statement**

We, in the Parish of the Assumption, Booterstown, value and encourage the participation of children and young people in all our Parish liturgies and activities. We recognise that this will enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional and social development.

As a Parish community, we recognise the dignity and rights of all children and young people and are committed to ensuring their safety and well being at all times, especially when participating in any activity sponsored or arranged by the Parish.

We will do everything possible to create and maintain safe environments for children and young people in order to secure their protection and enable their full participation in the life of the Parish and of the church.

## **Implementing the Policy**

This policy statement is put into effect through the establishment of the role of the Parish Child Protection Committee, in accordance with the principles stated in “Our Children, Our Church” whereby every Parish will appoint one or more members to a Parish Child Protection Committee. These people will be supported by the Child Protection Co-ordinator.

### **3. PARISH CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

Four parishioners have completed the training programme organised by the Diocese. Their function is to:

1. Promote awareness of the Church's Child Protection Policies using the Parish website, notice boards, newsletters and information sessions.
2. Ensure that the public has ready access to the Diocesan Designated Person or his office by publishing contact details on notice boards and in newsletters.
3. Facilitate anyone in the Parish in bringing an allegation of child abuse to the attention of the Diocesan Designated Person.
4. Facilitate anyone in the Parish in bringing an allegation of child abuse to the attention of the Gardai or Health Service Executive, by providing relevant addresses and telephone numbers.
5. Arrange for a complainant to complete an Incident Report Form for submission to the Diocesan Designated Person.

The "Diocesan Designated Person" is appointed by the Dublin Diocese. Their role includes providing information and advice, considering child protection concerns, consulting with the advisory committee and liaising with the Health Services.

#### **Parish Child Protection Committee**

Geraldine Murphy – Child Protection Representative

#### Other Members:

Ron MacDonald

Gillian McLaughlin

John O'Reilly

## 4. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### Guiding Principles

#### *Dignity*

- Children are people and their childhood is valuable in his or her own right.
- Each child is affirmed as a gift of God with a right to dignity of life and bodily integrity, which must be respected, nurtured and protected. These rights are inalienable by the very fact of their human dignity.

#### *Nurture*

- Children have a right to be heard and taken seriously, taking account of their age and level of understanding. They should be consulted and involved in relation to all matters and decisions that affect their lives.
- Children have a right to care and support, and to be raised in environments free from abuse or neglect with good role models whom they can fully trust and who will care for and nurture their spiritual and physical maturity.

#### *Protect*

- The Parish has a responsibility to operate effective systems to assure the protection of children. This includes having a proper recruitment, formation and training strategy in place and working cooperatively with other agencies in the best interest of the child.
- All personnel (whether priests, religious, employees or volunteers) and working with children in Parish activities must be aware of their duty both to prevent child abuse and to report concerns or suspicions.
- Every action and procedure must consider the overall needs of the child. Actions taken on behalf of the child should not in themselves be abusive or cause the child unnecessary distress.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting the child and regards for rights of carers and adults. Where there is a conflict, **the welfare of the child will always come first.**

#### *Risk Evaluation*

- The Child Protection Policy will not be implemented in such a way as to limit or constrain normal, safe and appropriate activities. Thus, where an adult, concerned for the well-being of children in his or her care is unsure of whether or not he or she is adhering to this policy, they will make their own assessment based on the code of behaviour. For example, one adult alone

with a large group of children or young people, whether of one gender or mixed gender, would not normally assess such a situation as presenting any specific risk and would generally be free to continue his or her work.

## **Key Directives**

In all decision-making and when responding to any situation of concern involving a child or young person the following two directives should be borne in mind and should create the context in which any decision is made or any action taken.

## **Paramount Principle**

The welfare of the child is paramount means that the interests and welfare of the child are of primary consideration.

## **Significant Harm**

In the context of the perceived ill treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child, whether or not it is significant is determined by his or her health and development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age and ability.

## **Dealing with Disclosure by a Child or Young Person**

Where a child or young person disclose abuse to an adult, the following guidelines should be followed. Whenever possible a second adult should be present.

- Be as calm and natural as possible.
- Remember you have been approached because you are trusted and possibly liked.
- Do not panic.



- Be aware that disclosure can be very difficult for the child.
- Remember the child may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time.
- Listen to what the child has to say. Do not pressurise the child. Allow him or her to disclose at their own pace and in his or her own words.
- Be careful when asking questions. Avoid asking about intimate details or suggesting that something else could have happened other than what you have been told. Such questions and suggestions could complicate a later official investigation.
- Assure the child that you believe him or her. Remember, false disclosures are very rare.
- Do not promise to keep secrets. At the earliest opportunity tell the child that you acknowledge that they have come to you because they trust you and that there are secrets which are not helpful and should not be kept because they make matters worse. Such secrets hide things that need to be known if people are to be helped and protected from further ongoing hurt. By refusing to make a commitment to secrecy to the child, you do run the risk that they may not tell you everything or indeed anything, there and then. However, it is better to do this than to tell a lie and ruin the child's confidence in yet another adult. By being honest, it is more likely that the child will return to you at another time. Do not make a promise to a child that cannot be kept.
- It is important that the adult differentiates in his/her own mind between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself. The child, quite possibly, may love or strongly like the alleged abuser while also disliking what was done to him/her.
- It is important to avoid expressing any judgement on, or anger towards, the alleged perpetrator, while talking with the child.
- It may be necessary to reassure the child that your feelings towards him or her have not been affected in a negative way as a result of what she/he has disclosed.

## **Reporting Procedure in Respect of a Child or Young Person**

- Every adult working with children and who suspects that a child participating in a Parish activity has been abused is obliged to relay their concern to one of the Parish Child Protection Committee as a matter of urgency and may also report the allegation to the HSE or Gardai.
- If a child has disclosed an allegation to an adult, then that adult must record in writing on the incident/accident form what the child has said, including insofar as is possible, the exact words utilised by the child.
- A member of the Parish Child Protection Committee must sign this report and inform the Designated Person where necessary.
- In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be in immediate and serious risk, the volunteer or a member of the Parish Child Protection Committee will contact the Duty Social Worker of the Health Services Executive or An Garda Síochána. Under no circumstances will a child be left in a dangerous situation without intervention.
- Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. The confidentiality of the child and family should be respected with due regard to the Department of Health Guidelines “Children First” which state that “giving information to others for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality”.

## **The Responsibility of Parents/Guardians**

The Parish of the Assumption, Booterstown takes very seriously its responsibilities and obligations with regard to ensuring, to the greatest extent possible, the safety and security of all children and young people participating in Parish activities.

Notwithstanding this, succeeding in this goal requires the partnership of the Parish (through its priests, religious, employees and volunteers) and the parents/guardians of the children and young people working together to live up to our individual responsibilities. Thus, whereas the Parish will make every possible effort to ensure the safety and security of children and young people, parents and guardians must similarly accept and discharge their responsibilities both to their children and young people and to the Parish at large.

## **Codes of Behaviour**

Children and young people feel more secure when they know the limits and boundaries appropriate to their own behaviour and that of others. In recognition of this, and in order to create an environment in which children feel valued, encouraged and affirmed, the Parish undertakes and requires that, when working or interacting with children and young people, all those working with or on behalf of the Parish are committed to and will adhere to the following codes of behaviour.

### **General Conduct**

- Physical punishment of children is not permissible under any circumstances.
- Verbal abuse of children or telling jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children is never acceptable.
- Best practice in relation to travel with children and young people must be observed. No adult should undertake any car or minibus journey alone with a child or young person. In the absence of parental consent, should only one adult be available, a minimum of three children or young people should be present for the entire journey. In the event of an emergency, where it is necessary to make a journey alone with a child, a record of this should be made and the child's parent or guardian should be informed as soon as possible.
- Children and young people will not be permitted to remain on church or Parish property unless they are under the supervision of at least two adults. Similarly, children and young people will not be allowed to be accompanied in any place that is not permanently staffed or which, by virtue of the holding of church services risks leaving a child being isolated or alone.
- All children and young people must be treated with equal respect; favouritism is not acceptable. A disproportionate amount of time should not be spent with any particular child.
- Adults working with children and young people must not engage in or tolerate any behaviour – verbal, psychological or physical – that could be construed as bullying or abusive.
- Alcohol, tobacco or drugs must not be used by personnel while supervising or working with children and young people.
- Under no circumstances may alcohol, tobacco or drugs be given to children or young people.

- Only age-appropriate language and material on media products (such as camera phones, internet and video) and activities will be used when working with children and young people. Sexually explicit or pornographic material is never acceptable.

### **Respect for Physical Integrity**

- The physical integrity of children and young people must be respected at all times.
- Personnel must not engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind – including tough physical play, physical reprimand and horseplay (e.g. tickling, wrestling). This should not prevent appropriate contact in situations where it is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of a child (e.g. where a child is distressed).

### **Respect for privacy**

- The right to privacy of children and young people must be respected at all times.
- Particular care regarding privacy must be taken when young people are in sensitive locations such as a toilet.
- Tasks of a personal nature (e.g. helping with toileting, washing or changing of clothing) must not be done for children or young people if they can undertake these tasks for themselves.

### **Meeting with Children and Young People**

- If the pastoral care of a child or young person necessitates meeting alone with them, such meetings should not be held in an isolated environment.
- Being alone with a child or young person is not wise or appropriate practice. The times and designated locations for meetings must allow for transparency and accountability (for example be held in rooms with a clear glass panel or window, in buildings where other people are present, and with the door of the room left open). Thus every meeting will follow the principle that it is observable and interruptible. A diary note should be made recording the date, time, location, duration and the purpose of the meeting.

- Visits to the home or private living quarters in the presbytery by personnel will not be encouraged, nor will meetings be conducted in such locations.
- When the need for a visit to the home of a child or young person arises, professional boundaries must be observed at all times.

### **Children with Special Needs or Disability**

- Children with special needs or disability may depend on adults more than other children for their care and safety, and so sensitivity and clear communication are particularly important.
- Where it is necessary to carry out tasks of a personal nature for a child with special needs, this should be done with the full understanding and consent of parents or guardians.
- In carrying out such personal care tasks, sensitivity must be shown to the child and the tasks should be undertaken with the utmost discretion.
- Any care task of a personal nature which a child or young person can do for themselves should not be undertaken by an adult volunteer.
- In an emergency where this type of help is required, parents should be fully informed as soon as it is reasonably possible.

### **Vulnerable People**

- Since especially vulnerable children may depend on adults more than other children for their care and safety, sensitivity and clear communication are of utmost importance.
- All adults working with children and young people must be aware that some vulnerable children may be more likely than other children to be bullied or subjected to other forms of abuse, and may also be less clear about physical and emotional boundaries.
- It is particularly important that vulnerable children be carefully listened to in recognition of the fact that they may have difficulty in expressing their concerns and in order that the importance of what they are saying is not underestimated.

## **Touching**

With regard to touching, the following guidelines will be followed by all adults working with children and young people:

- Touching will always be in response to the need of the child and not the adult.
- Touching will always be with the child's permission – resistance from the child will be respected.
- At all times, the breasts, buttocks and groin will be avoided.
- Any touching will be open and not secretive and always governed by the age and developmental stage of the child.

## **Reporting of an Allegation, Complaint or Concern**

- All adults working with children and young people undertake that any and every allegation, complaint or concern voiced or otherwise made known to an adult by a child will be recorded and reported to a Parish Child Protection Representative.
- Such confidential information must be kept in the Parish Centre. Access to this information will be available to the chairperson of the Parish Council and members of the Parish Child Protection Committee if and when required.

## **Publication of the Child Protection Policy**

It is envisaged that the Child Protection Policy document will be widely available to the Parish community. Notices will be placed in the weekly newsletter, inside the church porch and outside the Parish Centre. Printed copies of the document will be kept in the Parish Centre and will be available to any parishioner on request. The document will also be available on the Parish website.

Prior to this the document will be distributed to all the Parish youth organisations. A meeting will be held in the Parish centre for all these groups where emphasis will be placed on the various forms in the Appendices, especially Appendix G which will form the basis of the Parish Child Protection Committee's annual report to the Parish Council.

## **5. PARISH BEST PRACTICE APPROACH**

### **The Parish undertakes to have the following in place:**

- ❑ Signed parental consent for each young person participating in any Parish activity.
- ❑ Codes of Behaviour for all adult leaders and young people (see pages 11-14)
- ❑ Where appropriate, record keeping processes including participant forms, incident/accident forms, volunteer application forms, programme attendance records and contact information for parents/guardians.
- ❑ All attendance records to be submitted to the Parish Centre on a monthly basis. All other forms will be lodged in the Parish Centre as the need arises. Twice a year reminders will be sent to all youth clubs/organisations to submit their relevant forms to the Parish Centre
- ❑ Procedure for recruitment of adults working with children and young people.
- ❑ Records to be kept in a secure place in the Parish Centre and access to them will only be available to the Parish Priest, the chairperson of the Parish Council, members of the Parish Child Protection Committee and the Parish Secretary.

The Parish undertakes that all concerns or complaints brought to the attention of the Parish personnel or to one of the Parish Child Protection Committee will be communicated immediately to the Diocesan Designated Person. The Archdiocese of Dublin has committed to all Parishes that the Diocesan Designated Person will respond promptly to all concerns and liaise with the required civil and church authorities. All concerns or complaints will be followed through in a timely and efficient manner.



## Appendix A

## List of Parish Groups & Other Contacts

Group Name	Activity
Altar Servers	Serving Masses
Faith Friends	Confirmation/Froebel Studies
Youth Club	Youth Activities
'Teen Club	For 12-18 Yrs in Youth Club
Youth Ministry	For 12+ Yrs
Children's Choir	For 6+ Yrs singing at Family Mass
Children's Liturgy	Organising Liturgy for Family Mass

Contact Names	Contact Details
Parish Child Protection Committee	Parish Centre: 01-2831593
- Geraldine Murphy (Child Protection Representative) - Ron MacDonald - Gillian McLaughlin - John O'Reilly	
Director of the Safeguarding & Child Protection Services of the Archdiocese of Dublin	Andrew Fagan: 01-8360314
Referral Services	
- Gardai Blackrock	01-6665200
- Child Line	1800-66-66-66
- Children's Hospital Crumlin	01-4096100
- National Children's Hospital Tallagh	01-4142000
- Samaritans	1850-609090
- HSE Duty Social Worker	01-2808403

# Parish of the Assumption, Booterstown

## Appendix B Youth Application and Parental Consent Form

### YOUTH APPLICATION FORM

YOUNG PERSON'S FULL NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

DATE OF BIRTH..... PRESENT AGE:.....

I wish to participate in the following Parish Organisations/Activities:

Name of Organisation/Activity.....

I agree to comply with the Parish Code of Behaviour:

Signed ..... Date: .....

### PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

I confirm that:

- (a) The above named young person is allowed participate in Parish Activities.
- (b) In the event of an emergency, the following persons should be contacted:

First Contact: ..... Phone Number .....

Second Contact: .....Phone Number: .....

In the event of illness, having parental responsibility for the above named child, I give permission for medical treatment to be administered where considered necessary by a person qualified in first aid, or by suitably qualified medical practitioners. If I cannot be contacted and my child should require emergency treatment, I authorise a qualified medical practitioner to provide emergency treatment or medication.

SIGNED ..... Date.....

Relationship to young person: Parent  Guardian  Other

If 'Guardian' or 'Other', please specify under what authority

.....

- Please complete and return this form as soon as possible to:  
Booterstown Parish Centre, Booterstown Avenue, Co. Dublin.



7. Have you worked with the Booterstown Parish before?  
Yes  No

Committee: \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

8. Please give details of any previous work or involvement with children or young people, either as a volunteer or in paid employment:

9. The following information is required to conform to Child Care Legislation and recommended Codes of Practice:

Have you ever been, or are you currently, the subject of any investigation, complaint or disciplinary procedure, caution, or awaiting the outcome of any pending prosecution?

Yes  No

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence, or been subject to caution or bound over against an individual or individuals?

Yes  No

Has an order ever been made against you in respect of a child in your care, which has been found to be in need of care, protection or control?

Yes  No

If yes, to any of the above, please give details:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Are you in good physical and mental health?

Yes  No

Over the past five years have you had any medical or other condition which could affect your ability or suitability to act as a volunteer / helper?

Yes  No

If "yes" please give details and list medication: -

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Please list any other information that you feel might be useful (e.g. Special skills/talents, Qualifications, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parish Group/Organisation for which you wish to volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you been a volunteer with any other Parish or organisation?

\_\_\_\_\_

12. The information in this section will only be used in case of emergency: Please give name of home contact / next of kin:

NAME:

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel:																			
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

\_\_\_\_\_

13. I hereby declare that the details on this form are correct at the date given below.

**Policy**  
I have read and understood the *Parish Child Protection Statement\** and I am suitable in every way to perform the work and duties of a volunteer\*.

I undertake to advise the Parish if any incident or occurrence arises, or is brought to my notice, between completion of this form and my participation in IHCPT activities, concerning matters referred to in Question 9 above.

I undertake to provide any further relevant information and advise the Parish Council of any changes after the date below in the information supplied on this form.

I agree not to be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which might reduce the standards of care and behaviour required. I agree to comply with directions received from the Parish on these matters.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date

Day				Month			Year												
-----	--	--	--	-------	--	--	------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--