

KILFENNAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
UPDATED January 2020

Creating a Safe Environment for children,
young people, leaders and staff

Introduction

At Kilfennan Presbyterian Church (KPC) our aim is to create and promote a safe environment for children, young people and leaders.

Children and young people attending organisations or groups meeting in our church do so for many reasons including their personal and spiritual development. They should enjoy these activities with optimum physical safety and free from the threat of abuse.

Similarly, leaders and helpers approved by Kirk Session to work with children and young people should enjoy serving confidently within the guidelines of this policy, and with advice and support from church leadership.

Aims

The aims of our child protection policy are to:

- Create and promote a safe environment for children, young people, leaders and staff;
- Provide clear guidance to all volunteers, helpers, leaders and staff who work with children and young people aged 0-18, in matters relating to child protection;
- Promote the highest standards of child protection practice; and,
- Protect leaders and staff from false allegations.

Policy Statement

This policy statement is aimed at providing a safe environment where children and young people may enjoy social contact and be able to develop personally and spiritually. Adults selected to work within youth ministries should be secure in the knowledge that they have the full support of the Kirk Session.

The Kirk Session of Kilfennan Presbyterian Church has adopted the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Child Protection Guidelines, Taking Care, approved by the General Assembly and revised in 2011. All organisations are expected to adhere to these guidelines and Explanatory Notes. The Kirk Session will review the implementation of the Guidelines every three years and will keep Taking Care on the agenda of the Kirk Session meetings.

1. Leadership

The Kirk session believes that the selection procedures outlined in section 2.4 (page 23 of the guidelines) will greatly assist the assessment of a person's suitability to work with children and young people. As a result of implementing such procedures, leaders and helpers within this congregation will be more assured of their position and of the confidence placed in them by the Kirk Session.

Procedure for the appointment of new organisational leaders and full or part time staff in Kilfennan Presbyterian Church

(except Ministers, Assistants Ministers, Student Assistants, other Ministers who shall be subject to specific arrangements)

Definition:

Leader hereafter shall mean:

- Volunteer within an organisation or group operating within the church or
- Full time or part time paid staff member and
- A person who is 18 years or older

Organisation shall mean:

Any organisation or group operating under the control and authority of the Kirk Session

The following steps will be undertaken in order to appoint a new leader to any position of responsibility within an organisation of the church (Annex C)

1. All prospective new leaders will be required to complete an Access NI form in respect of Child Protection which shall be submitted to Access NI for checking and advice. A satisfactory vetting outcome will be required before any new leader can be considered further for a leadership position within the church.
2. Persons who are not well known to the congregation (attending less than 2 years) will be required to provide 2 referees who are not relatives.
3. Following satisfactory completion of the Access NI process, the overall content of the Church's specific Child Protection Policy shall be fully explained to all new leaders; this

can be done on a group basis or individually. A copy of the Church's Child Protection Policy will be handed to prospective leaders at this stage. When available, a copy of "We Care 4U Too" will be handed to new leaders also.

4. All new leaders shall attend specified Child Protection training provided by Taking Care, PCI
5. Thereafter prospective new leaders should be interviewed individually before taking up position to ensure that they understand the Child Protection Policy and their responsibilities within it. This will normally be by the Organisational Leader in Charge and the Minister and an elder appointed by Session.
6. A report of interview will be made available to the Kirk Session who, subject to a satisfactory report, will confirm the appointment to leadership.
7. It will be permissible for a prospective new leader to visit an organisation to test their own interest and gifts; and for an organisation to test the suitability of a potential leader without being checked, trained or approved by the appropriate child protection body or the Kirk Session. However, this shall only be under the direct supervision of an existing leader and be time limited – normally a few weeks.
8. No prospective leader shall be left unsupervised at any time within any organisation.
9. Record Keeping: All confidential records e.g. training attendance and references will be safely stored by the designated person. All Access NI application forms shall be safely stored by the Designated person.
10. This procedure will be subject to regular review – at least every 3 years by the Kirk Session.

2. Training

Leaders and helpers who work with children and young people should attend Taking Care training on a regular basis (every 3 years). Even those who have a good knowledge of child protection issues in another field should attend as Taking Care training is the only training available that is specifically dealing with church activities within a church environment.

3. Reporting of Concerns

The leaders in each of our organisations will be fully conversant with the reporting procedure where there is a concern about the welfare of a child, as outlined in Section 1.5 of the Taking Care Guidelines. Leaders must not hesitate to report a concern about a child if they are at any time worried about their welfare.

4. Parental Consent Forms

Organisational leaders must ensure that they have home contact numbers, parental consent and medical information regarding the children in the organisations which they are working with. Special consent forms will be issued for any 'off the premises' activity and residential programmes. Leaders in charge will store these forms in a safe place.

5. Designated Person

The Kirk Session has appointed a Designated person, Louise Lynch. She will provide consultation, advice and support to organisations and, on request to the Kirk Session on matters concerning the welfare of children and young people. The Kirk session will keep organisational leaders updated. Any matters brought to the attention of the Designated Person will be treated in strict confidence. Information will only be divulged where there is a legitimate need to know.

6. Good Standards of Practice

Each organisation will be expected to comply with good standards of practice as outlined in the Taking care guidelines. This includes physical contact, recommended ratios, transport, residential programmes and outings, church sleepovers, photographs and working with children who have special needs.

7. Technology

Leaders should limit the direct internet communication they have with individual children and young people in the organisation of which they are leaders. All such communication with children and young people should, as far as possible, be within an open forum, in order to protect both young people and leaders. Leaders should be wise as to how they use this form of communication.

Leaders should not post photographs of young people from the organisation in which they are leaders, on a social networking site or anywhere on the Internet, unless they have written parental consent.

Leaders involved in Youth and Children's work should only have children's mobile numbers if the nature of their involvement requires them to phone or text children and if this is the case, contacting children through the use of mobile phones should be done only after getting written parental consent at the commencement of the year. Kirk session should be informed which leaders need to contact children for their specific roles.

8. Working Together

It is important that all leaders know the boundaries and rules of an organisation and that these are explained to children and parents. Each organisation will be required to draw up a written 'code of conduct' for children and young people, at the commencement of the year's activities, based on this policy. (Sample code see Annex A) The code of conduct will help to create a safe, secure environment. All leaders must abide by the guidelines as set out in Taking Care. A sample code of behaviour for leaders and helpers is included at the end of this policy. (Annex B) A copy of this will be given to all leaders of organisations.

9. Health and safety

The Kirk Session expects organisations to adhere to guidance on health and safety matters outlined in the Taking Care guidelines. A risk assessment form should be completed for each organisation as well for any outings or occasional events. Leaders will be informed of fire and first aid procedures.

10. Transport

Organisations are expected to adhere to the guidance of the Taking Care guidelines relating to the use of private cars and minibuses for transporting children and young people to and from youth activities.

11. Residential

Guidance on residential trips is provided by the taking care guidelines and will be followed on all residential trips organised by the organisations of KPC. A list of relevant contact details must be left with the designated person (or a person approved by the designated person) during the period of the residential.

12. Register of Leaders

Each organisation will complete an annual register of leaders. This information will be held as per Taking Care Update 16 (Winter 2010)

13. Implementation and Review

The Kirk Session is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and will review it every three years.

Signed  _____ Minister

 _____ Clerk of Session

Date 16 Feb 2020