

# **Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin**

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## **Child Safeguarding Policy**

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## **Preface**

These guidelines have been produced to ensure that we provide a safer environment for all our children, leaders and staff. These guidelines are based on the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice 2018. The two substantive topics of child safeguarding and health and safety are ever changing, thus we accept that some subject matter will change in time.

The safeguarding of both children and vulnerable adults is clearly very important; as a Church we provide programmes, activities, education and care to these groups. We must continue to build on good practice, aware that there is no “zero risk” – all our work involves some level of risk.

Leaders and staffs within the church do not have to become child protection experts but need to be made aware of the issues. These guidelines were produced in such a way that they contain most of the information that leaders within the church will need to know when working with children. However, there is awareness also that many aspects of child safeguarding do change as legislation and State guidance dictates.

## **Our Aim**

Our aim is to create and promote a safe environment for children, leaders and staff. Our church receives through its doors every year many children. We have a legal duty of care to look after these children and provide a safe environment for them as best we can. This policy provides guidance to all involved in youth and children’s work and ministry within the church to help ensure that children enjoy their activities with optimum physical safety and are free from the threat of abuse. It will also alert leaders to signs of distress which may indicate that a child has been harmed. This policy will guide our church to appoint a designated person(s) for child protection, to follow the recruitment and appointment process for new leaders which includes the vetting process, to make sure the right number of leaders are present, and to make sure all leaders attend child safeguarding training and are fully aware of the reporting process in case a child protection concern or incident were to arise. By adopting and using this policy our church will be raising the standard of care for those entrusted to them, no matter how brief the event or small the organisation they attend.

## **Why does our church need a Child Safeguarding Policy?**

There are four main reasons why we need to have a Child Safeguarding Policy within the church.

### **1 A Legal Requirement**

The Children First Act 2015 states that “A provider of a relevant service shall ensure, as far as practicable, that each child availing of the service from the provider is safe from harm while availing of that service”. This is a legal obligation on the Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin to comply with the requirements of that legislation which in turn means ensuring that the Church has a Child Safeguarding Statement and a Child Safeguarding Policy in line with Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017.

### **2 A Biblical Basis**

The church has our own duty of care found in the Bible. 1 Peter 5 v 2 says, “be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be”. Next to proclaiming God’s Word and the love of Christ, keeping our children safe would be of paramount importance.

### 3 For Our Own Protection

The policy is not there only to protect children but leaders and staff too, and ultimately the organisations of the church. Sometimes leaders may think that aspects of the policy are not necessary, however it should be remembered that it is for their own protection and they should not rely only on their reputation to protect them.

By having this policy in place leaders and helpers will be assured of their own protection in the event of false allegations.

### 4 The Intrinsic Sinful Nature of Human Beings

No church is immune from the problem of trusted adults misusing their position. This requires a response which is aimed at both prevention and care for those who may have been mistreated. We must not be naive to the fact that there are people in the world today with tendency to harm children and so we as a church must do all that we can to protect our children, promote good practice and prevent abuse.

## Glossary of Terms

<b>Child -</b>	For the purposes of this policy, a 'child' means anyone who is under 18 years of age. In Ireland, the Child Care Act (1991) defines a child as any person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or who has been married.
<b>Staff</b>	Refers to those who are employed by the Church.
<b>Leader</b>	Refers to those who assist in the running of programmes or who are involved with the children on a voluntary basis
<b>Young Leader</b>	Refers to those aged 15 – 17 who assists in organisations working with children
<b>Designated Liaison Person</b>	refers to the person appointed as a resource to any staff member or leader who has a child protection concern. DLPs are responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures are followed correctly and promptly and act as a liaison person with other agencies.
<b>Mandated Person</b>	refers to those designated in the Children First Act 2015 as mandated persons. Mandated persons have a statutory obligation to report concerns which meet or exceed a particular threshold to Tusla and to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports, where requested to do so
<b>Relevant Person</b>	refers to the person who is appointed by a provider of a relevant service to be the first point of contact in respect of the provider's Child Safeguarding Statement.
<b>Statutory Authorities</b>	These are An Garda Síochána and Child and Family Agency (Túsla). They are obliged under the law to investigate and assess in child abuse cases.

## Declaration of Guiding Principles

Chinese Gospel Church Dublin provides the following activities to children:

- Language School at Esker House and Abbey Street
- Kids Sunday [School](#)
- WOW for secondary school children
- Kidnetics for kids between 6-9 years old
- Nursery for pre-school age children
- Children's dance classes

We believe that:

- Our priority to ensure the welfare and safety of every child who attends our organisation is paramount.
- Our guiding principles and procedures to safeguard children reflect national policy and legislation laid out in the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice.
- Our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures should be reviewed every two years or sooner if necessary due to organisational issues or changes in legislation or national policy.
- All children have an equal right to attend an organisation that respects them as individuals and encourages them to reach their potential, regardless of their background.
- We are committed to upholding the rights of every child who attends our organisation, including the rights to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to and heard.
- Our guiding principles apply to everyone in the organisation including Board Elders, Pastor, staff and leaders.
- Staff and leaders must conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of our organisation.
- We are committed to ensuring people's rights to confidentiality.

The Designated Liaison Person for Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin is Miranda Chan.

## **Recruitment Procedures**

It is necessary to have a recruitment and appointment policy in place to select leaders in order to provide a safe environment for children. A proper appointment procedure is one of the most sensible and effective ways of assessing a person's suitability to work with children, and may in itself act as a deterrent to potential abusers. This is often felt to be an unnecessary burden, particularly if the person is part-time, a leader or already known to the Pastor or members of the congregation. However, the more routine the procedure becomes, the less intimidating it will be to all concerned. By having good standards of practice in our church, people are more likely to want to join. Increasingly parents want evidence of good recruitment.

Care needs to be taken to ensure that anyone who may be unsuitable for working with children is not given the opportunity to become a leader. It is important to ensure that everyone participates in a selection procedure, even if they are recognised as people of good standing.

### ***Advertising the position***

All staff and voluntary positions will be filled through approaching potential candidates from within the congregation of the Church and seeking them to apply for the position.

### ***Defining the role***

This involves thinking through what exactly the role of a new staff member or leader is to be, and what skills will be required for him/her to perform effectively. Written job descriptions for staff are necessary. Leaders are given a verbal introduction to their role before they taken on their position.

### ***Application form***

This should be supplied with a clear job/role description outlining what is expected of the staff if appropriate. This form allows potential staff to provide all relevant details which must be treated confidentially. Potential leaders should also be required to fill in application forms with the required details.

These forms can be found in the appendix.

### ***Declaration***

All applicants will be asked to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children..

### ***Interview***

All potential staff will be interviewed with regards to their job. Those who will be applying to be a leader should go through a less formal interview undertaken by the ministry leaders, mandated person or Governing Body.. These interviews should be used to explain their roles, ask questions on their history and so on and so forth.

### ***Identification:***

The potential staff/leaders will be asked to provide two forms of identification along with their Garda Vetting Invitation form to confirm identity. Copies of these will be held by Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin on the individual's file.

### ***References***

References should be taken up with at least two people who are not family members and, ideally, one of whom should have first-hand knowledge of the applicant's previous work or contact with children. References should be taken up in writing and should be followed up orally. These referee forms can be found in the appendix.

### ***Garda vetting***

Applicants deemed to be suitable at interview should be informed that they will be the subject of a Garda vetting check and asked to complete a Garda vetting invitation form (see Appendix). The

Designated Liaison Person will forward the Garda vetting form to the South Dublin Volunteer Centre who will forward it to the National Vetting Bureau. The individual will receive an email from the National Vetting Bureau inviting them to fill in the on-line application for vetting. Once the vetting process has been completed by the National Vetting Bureau, Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin will receive a vetting disclosure for each individual from the South Dublin Volunteer Centre. Vetting disclosures will be assessed on an individual basis.

No new staff or leader will be allowed to commence working with children until a vetting disclosure have been received in relation to that individual.

Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin shall ensure that all staff and leaders are re-vetted every three years or sooner if they change roles within the Church.

### ***Appointment***

Following receipt of all the above forms, interview and receipt of Garda vetting the Designated Liaison Person will assess the suitability of the staff and leader applicants and forward the names of the successful applicants to the Governing Body for their appointment to be ratified.

### ***Probationary period (staff) / trial period (leaders)***

All appointments should be conditional on a satisfactory period of work. Every new post should be reviewed within an agreed period of time - usually six months.

### ***Staff and Leaders from abroad***

Background checks are not currently possible for many overseas staff and leaders. When recruiting staff/leaders that have come from abroad, certificates of good conduct can sometimes be obtained from the police or church leaders in their home church. However, these need to be treated with caution. As with any other criminal conviction certificate, it can only provide 'known' information. This information needs to be handled with care. What constitutes an offence in this State (and would be seen as child abuse) may not in the country from which the applicant originates. References therefore need to be viewed with this in mind. However, it is possible to complete Garda Vetting whilst resident in another country; this will check not only the Garda records but also Europol and Interpol records but will only show up convictions.

It is advisable to require candidates to sign a sworn declaration covering the period that they resided outside of Ireland to confirm that there is nothing (convictions or otherwise) in their background which would prevent them from working with children. This declaration form can be found in the appendix.

### ***Young people under 18 years working with children***

It is never appropriate to require someone aged less than 18 years to take on the role of leader or be in sole charge of children as this would mean leaving a child in charge of children. At least two adults should be in charge of any group of children.

Young leaders (15 – 17 years of age) are assisting in order to gain expertise, citizenship development, personal or professional development and are not expected to take on the full range of duties of a staff or leader that is over 18.

Those aged 16 and 17 years should be asked to complete a Garda vetting invitation form and their parents to complete a Parental Consent Form for Garda Vetting (see appendix). Their Garda vetting should be received back from the National Vetting Bureau and their appointment as a Junior Leader ratified by the Governing Body, prior to them commencing working with children. Under 16s do not currently require Garda vetting.

They must be provided with an appropriate form of training to cope with basic areas, such as bullying, shouting, physical contact, emergency procedures and first-aid policy.



## **Support, Supervision and Training for Staff and leaders**

New staff and leaders should be provided with the Child Safeguarding Policy and have someone who knows it sit and talk it through with them. The Designated Liaison Person shall maintain a record of what Child Safeguarding training staff and leaders have attended and ensure that staff and leaders comply with the training requirements set out in the Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin's Child Safeguarding Training Strategy.

Following appointment and completion of Child Safeguarding training, new staff and leaders will be required to sign up to the Chinese Gospel Church's Child Safeguarding policy and agree to uphold same in their post. This Declaration of Acceptance form can be found in the appendix.

It is good practice to set up a supervision system for staff and leaders, which means arranging to see staff and leaders at regular intervals whether on their own or in small groups. This provides support for staff and leaders and an opportunity to talk through any questions or difficulties they may have. It also gives the supervisor(s) the opportunity to assess progress and whether any additional training should be provided.

## **Code of Behaviour**

Codes of behaviour provide protection for everyone, including children, staff and leaders. It is important that everyone involved has guidelines on what is expected, and what is not accepted, with respect to their behaviour. The code of behaviour for staff and leaders will help to create a supportive environment to provide a child-centred approach for the children involved in the Church. The code of behaviour for children will help to provide a contract for the children to agree to and abide by.

### ***Code of behaviour for staff and leaders***

The code of behaviour for staff and leaders has been categorised under five headings:

- Child-centred approach;
- Best practice;
- Inappropriate behaviour;
- Physical contact;
- Health & Safety.

### **Child-centred approach**

- Treat all children equally;
- Listen to and respect children;
- Involve children in decision-making, as appropriate;
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability);
- Use appropriate language (physical and verbal);
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere;
- Offer constructive criticism when needed;
- Treat all children as individuals;
- Respect a child's personal space;
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate, with children and their parents/guardians;
- Agree group 'contract' before beginning session;
- Encourage feedback from group;
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids and materials;
- Lead by example;
- Be aware of a child's other commitments when scheduling rehearsals or activities, e.g., school or exams;
- Be cognisant of a child's limitations, due to a medical condition for example;
- Create an atmosphere of trust;
- Respect differences of ability, culture, race and sexual orientation.

### **Good practice**

- Ensure that a parental consent form is completed for each child on an annual basis (name, address, phone, special requirements, attendance, emergency contact);
- Make parents/guardians, children, and visitors aware of the Child Protection & Welfare Policy and procedures;
- Have emergency procedures in place and make all staff and leaders aware of these procedures;
- Be inclusive of children with special needs;
- Plan and be sufficiently prepared, both mentally and physically;
- Report any concerns to the Designated Liaison Person and follow reporting procedures;
- Report to the Designated Liaison Person any concerns that they may have about fellow staff or leader's practice which may cause harm to a child or the reputation of the Church and complete an incident form
- Encourage children to report any bullying, concerns or worries and to be aware of the Anti-bullying Policy.;

- Observe appropriate dress and behaviour;
- Evaluate work practices on a regular basis;
- Provide appropriate training for staff and leaders;
- Report and record any incidents and accidents;
- Update and review policies and procedures regularly;
- Keep parents/guardians informed of any issues that concern their children;
- Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved; observe appropriate gender balance for residential;
- Don't be passive in relation to concerns, i.e., don't 'do nothing';
- Don't let a problem get out of control;
- Avoid if at all possible giving a lift to a child and if you do then make sure that parents/guardians are informed;
- Maintain awareness around language and comments made. If you think that something you said may have caused offence or upset, then try to address it in a sensitive manner.

### **Inappropriate behaviour**

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children;
- Don't use or allow offensive or sexually suggestive physical and/or verbal language.
- Don't single out a particular child for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule, unwelcome focus or attention;
- Don't allow/engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
- Don't hit or physically chastise children;
- Don't socialise inappropriately with children, e.g., outside of structured organisational activities
- Don't engage in rough or inappropriate behaviour.

### **Physical contact**

- Seek consent of child in relation to physical contact (except in an emergency or a dangerous situation);
- Avoid horseplay or inappropriate touch;
- Check with children about their level of comfort when doing activities that might involve physical contact.
- It may sometimes be necessary for leaders to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or have disabilities. In such situations leaders need to be sensitive to the child and undertake personal care with the utmost discretion

### **Health and safety**

- Don't leave children unattended or unsupervised;
- Manage any dangerous materials;
- Provide a safe environment;
- Be aware of accident and incident procedure and follow accordingly.

### **Disciplinary procedures if a leader is found in breach of Code of Behaviour**

Each breach of the Code of Behaviour will be assessed by the Designated Liaison Person. If a leader is deemed to be in breach of the Code of Behaviour the Designated Liaison Person will speak to the individual leader. The Designated Liaison Person will determine whether the leader should be given a warning on that occasion but will remind the leader of the standards expected of Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin leaders.

If there is a further breach of the Code of Behaviour by leader following a warning, the Designated Liaison Person will meet with the leader and the Designated Liaison Person/Governing Body will ask the leader to resign from their position.

If a serious allegation of abuse is made against a leader, the Designated Liaison Person will suspend the leader until such time as the investigation has been completed and the Designated

Liaison Person will then determine the position of the leader in Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin subject to the findings of the investigation.

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

Each breach of the Code of Behaviour will be assessed by the Governing Body. If a staff member is deemed to be in breach of the Code of Behaviour the Governing Body will speak to the individual staff. The Governing Body will determine whether the staff should be given a warning on that occasion but will remind the staff of the standards expected of Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin staff.

If there is a further breach of the Code of Behaviour by staff following a warning, the Governing Body will meet with the staff and the Governing Body will dismiss the staff member from their position.

If a serious allegation of abuse is made against a staff, the Governing Body will suspend the staff until such time as the investigation has been completed and the Governing Body will then determine the position of the staff in Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin subject to the findings of the investigation.

## ***Code of Behaviour for Children***

A Code of Behaviour helps the children participating in Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin activities and their parents to know exactly what behaviour is and is not acceptable at those activities. The code of behaviour will help to create a safe, secure environment and an atmosphere where children will feel that they can confide in the staff and leaders.

At the start of each year the staff or leader in charge of the group should sit down with the children and draw up a code of behaviour for the group so that the children understand what is expected of them and what is not acceptable. Each group may wish to add additional items to the sample code of behaviour for children which would be specific to their group or even reword the items to make them more age appropriate to specific groups. The staff/leader should also outline what discipline will be taken if a member does not abide by the code of behaviour. Parents should be advised of the Code of Behaviour and disciplinary measures associated with it for any group their child is participating in.

### **Sample Code of Behaviour**

As members of this group we will:

1. Respect the role and authority of the staff and leaders;
2. Respect the views and feelings of other members of the group;
3. Respect the right of every member to express their view and opinion;
4. Respect the right of every member to be heard and listened to;
5. Respect both staffs'/leaders' and members' personal privacy and property;
6. Show due care and responsibility for equipment and property;
7. Deem unacceptable the following activities and behaviour;
  - i. Consumption of alcohol and smoking during group activities;
  - ii. Physical abuse of other members and / or staffs/leaders;
  - iii. Verbal abuse including 'put downs' of other members and staffs/leaders;
  - iv. Wilful destruction or damage to property or equipment;
  - v. The misuse of any substance or stimulant;
  - vi. The use of camera phones in the changing facilities at any event.

### **Disciplinary procedures if a child is found in breach of Code of Behaviour**

Members who are found to be in breach of the Code of Behaviour for Children may be subject to disciplinary actions. The disciplinary action should be agreed between at least two staff/leaders of the group and should be appropriate to the seriousness of the incident/s. The parents/guardians of the child and the child will be informed of the disciplinary action which will be taken. Where staffs or leaders take disciplinary action against a member, the leader in charge of the group should be informed.

The options for disciplinary action include:

- a) Providing support to the child to get them to understand that their behaviour is not acceptable and monitoring their behaviour.
- b) For continued breaches or more serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour for Children, allow the child to continue to participate in the event/activity once they have apologised for their behaviour and promised not to breach the code of behaviour again. Their behaviour would be closely monitored.
- c) For the most serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour for Children or where a child fails to rectify behaviour following application of option (a) and (b) above, sending the child home; not allowing them to participate in any further events/activities and terminating their membership of the group will be considered.

# **Safety Practices**

## **General Safety**

Safety is of prime importance during any activity. This set of guidelines brings together the two agendas of child protection and health and safety in order to create a safe environment for everyone. That is not only the responsibility of the leader in charge but of every leader and helper.

## **Records**

### **Parental Consent Form**

A Parental Consent Form should be completed by the parents/guardians for each child at the beginning of each year (see Appendix). Relevant information regarding allergies, medical conditions, special needs etc should be shared with the leaders working with particular children. Parents will be asked, via the parental consent form, to inform the company if any information contained on the parental consent form changes during the year.

### **Additional Written Parental Consent**

Additional Written Parental Consent (to include medical information) should be obtained before taking member out of premises or away on a trip (see Appendix).

### **Attendance Records**

Attendance Records (for both children and staff and leaders) should be kept for all activities.

### **Accidents / Incidents**

All Accidents / Incidents (no matter how minor) should be recorded on the Accident / Incident Report Form (see Appendix).

## **Premises**

Always check the premises that you are using to highlight any obvious hazards or potential risks. Do your best to have anything removed that should not be there and may cause a significant risk to the members of the group. Adequate supervision should be provided at all times and extra care should be taken when using sports equipment. Areas where maintenance work is taking place should never be used and must be screened off. The Governing Body and Ministry Leaders should keep group leaders informed about maintenance work.

The leader in charge should have access to a phone in case of emergency (make sure there is adequate mobile phone reception if there is no landline on church premises).

Staff and leaders should ensure that children are informed of areas that are out of bounds to them and ensure that they do not enter those areas during activities.

The Governing Body shall ensure that there are adequate light, heat and sanitation facilities for the groups meeting on the premises.

## **Access to premises during activities**

It is imperative that when children's activities are taking place in the Church premises that the front door is kept locked so that access is limited to those attending the children's activity and the staff and leaders leading that group. If parents or others wish to gain access to the premises during these activities they should have to ring a door bell or utilise an intercom and a staff member or leader should open the door to allow them access to the premises.

Where a children's activity is taking place as other activities are taking place, staff and leaders should be aware of the other groups using the premises and the potential threats that this may

entail. This may involve having extra staff and leaders in place for these activities to monitor the door to the premises and supervise bathroom facilities.

It is essential that at the end of children's activities that children are handed over to the parents or the adult authorised to collect the children by a staff member or leader. Parents should be reminded that it is their responsibility to supervise their children outside of children's activities whilst they are on the Church premises.

### Fire

All staff and leaders should be aware of the evacuation procedures for the premises in which they are operating. All staff and leaders should be aware of the location of fire exits and ensure that access is not obstructed. Staff and leaders should know where the nearest fire extinguishers are located; these must be checked regularly by a qualified person. Fire drills should be conducted to ensure that all members know what evacuation procedure to follow in the event of a real fire.

### First Aid and Accident Procedures

Staff and leaders should be familiar with the Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin's Health & Safety Statement and procedures for first aid and dealing with accidents.

### Supervision

All activities should have constant **adult supervision** and children should not be left unsupervised.

The minimum adult/child ratio in any group should be as follows:

- 0 - 4 years                1 adult to 3 children with a minimum of 2 adults present
- 5 - 12 years             1 adult to 8 children with a minimum of 2 adults present
- 12+ years                1 adult to 10 children with a minimum of 2 adults present

This means that for the first 3, 8 or 10 children in a group depending on the age you need two adults present and every time you go over 3, 8 or 10 or multiple thereof you need an additional adult (e.g. 20 5 – 8 year olds in a group need a minimum of 4 adults present).

Local circumstances, the ages of the members, the experience of the leaders should be taken into consideration. Safety, ability / disability of members and the nature of the activities being undertaken may require that ratio of children to adults be considerably lower.

### Risk Assessment

Risk assessment should be completed/reviewed for each group on at least an annual basis or more frequently in the event of new activities being introduced. Risk assessment should also be completed for each outing, residential or community/outreach event. There may be times when risk assessments are carried out for a specific purpose or period of time e.g. an individual with a temporary mobility issue or a leader who is pregnant.

It is the role of the person in charge of the group along with others to help them if necessary, to complete the risk assessment as they will be most familiar with the activities and members of the group.

It is important that if a risk is identified on by risk assessment, an adequate control is put in place. Health and safety should be a regular agenda item at Governing Body meetings. The following guidance will help leaders when completing risk assessment:

- . A hazard is something which may cause harm e.g. chairs piled high which a small child could climb on to. Hazards should be identified and noted in the risk assessment
- . A risk is the chance that a person may be hurt by a hazard. Risks may vary according to different age groups who attend the group e.g. piled up chairs would not be considered a risk to an older person but would definitely be a risk to a toddler or small child

- A control is something that can be put in place or something that can be changed to limit the risk e.g. the chairs could be set around the hall instead or only piled together in pairs.

It may be impossible to remove the risk completely but it is our job to manage it in order to ensure that we can continue with our activities, even those which may be considered high risk. The church need to demonstrate in the event of an insurance claim that they took “reasonable care” to protect the children and adults attending their organisations.

### **Insurance**

The provision of insurance protection for churches remains a complex issue. The three main areas of cover relate to offsetting legal expenses in the event of a claim; public liability cover relating to claims for inadequate supervision, negligence, etc, and management indemnity to cover errors, omissions, negligent advice or a wrongful act.

### **High Risk Activities**

Some activities such as trampolining and bouncy castles are described as “high risk” by insurance companies. These activities require a little extra thought and sometimes extra supervision perhaps by trained people. You may also require parental consent depending on what the activity is. Additional insurance is often needed to cover these higher risk activities; on occasion cover may not be available. Always plan ahead and check with your insurance broker in advance of the event.

### **Transport**

Youth work may involve transporting children at some stage. Whether this is by car, coach or minibus and whether it is to and from the church building or an organised outing or residential, safety must be considered a priority at all times.

When planning an outing, leaders must exercise discretion as to who the drivers of the vehicles will be. A driver transporting other people’s children must be aware of his/her responsibility towards the passengers and drive carefully within the national speed limit. A driver should know what to do in the event of a breakdown or accident and must ensure that they have adequate and up to date insurance cover. Greater consideration should be given to recently qualified drivers as nominated drivers on an outing or residential due to their lack of driving experience.

Leaders should avoid transporting a child or young person on their own. It is good practice to have another leader or other children in the car. However, if a situation does occur when a leader has to transport a child alone, they should ensure that other leaders know this is happening and that the child is in the back seat. If possible, parents should be made aware that their child will be in the car on their own with a leader, affording them the opportunity to make alternative arrangements.

Drivers who carry other people’s children in cars must make sure they use child restraints for each child carried, or adult seatbelts appropriately. Child restraints are rearward-facing baby seats, forward-facing child seats, booster seats and booster cushions. Seatbelts must be worn for any journey, no matter how short. In the Republic of Ireland it is the driver’s responsibility that seatbelts are worn for all passengers under 17 years old.

Booster seats must be used when travelling by car in line with relevant legislation: In the Republic of Ireland, children under 5 feet/150 cm in height and weighing less than 36 kilograms (generally children up to 11 or 12 years old) must use the correct child seat or booster cushion. The only exception to using a child seat, booster seat or booster cushion is if a child is travelling in a taxi.

In the Republic of Ireland, a person driving a minibus must have a full category D driving licence for which they must sit a theory and practical test. If driving the church’s minibus(es), drivers must be named on the church’s insurance policy. Accident/Incident report forms and a breakdown logbook should be carried in church minibuses and kept up to date. A first aid kit and fire extinguisher should also be on board and drivers should be familiar with their use. The law states that it is the driver’s responsibility to make sure that each vehicle is in a road-worthy condition before use.



Failure to do so may result in the driver being legally liable in the event of any accident. Therefore, each driver must carry out a range of checks to ensure the road-worthiness of the vehicle. If in doubt, the vehicle should not be driven.

In minibuses, children over 3 years old must wear seatbelts or use child restraints if available. In the Republic of Ireland road traffic regulations require the fitting of seatbelts in all forward facing seats in minibuses. On larger buses and coaches all seated passengers must wear seatbelts. The driver must notify passengers when they board that they have to wear their seatbelts and/or signs must be displayed at every seat. When booking a minibus, bus or coach, ask whether child restraints can be provided or whether you can use your own.

Leaders who accompany children in minibuses/coaches/boats/trains etc should, where possible, sit among the children and be dispersed in the vehicle. For example, there should be at least one adult travelling in the back of a minibus and preferably near the exit points of the vehicle. Their group members must be in the sight of a leader at all times.

### **Residential Programmes and Outings**

Churches and organisations can offer a wide range of activities outside church premises. These may include day trips to the seaside, forest parks, theme parks, visits to the cinema, theatre, museums and shopping trips. As well as this, residential programmes often become the highlight of any church's youth programme, offering more opportunity to enhance friendships within the group. While recognising the tremendous impact these trips can have on a young person's emotional, physical and spiritual development, the leader in charge ought to note the following:

#### *The Residential Centre*

Check your location and accommodation. Ensure that it is adequate for your groups and activity. The centre must have adequate insurance cover for your group and the activities it hopes to engage in. Insurance should in particular cover high-risk activities e.g. canoeing, rock climbing etc. The centre should inform you of its rules and regulations. Make every effort to be aware of its timetable e.g. whether it has a lights-out time, meal times, what time it expects the group to arrive and to depart. The centre should provide access to first aid/GP in the event of an emergency. The centre should also provide separate sleeping accommodation for males/females.

#### *Parental Consent*

Parents'/carers' consent must be obtained when taking any young person away for a residential or outing.

Before taking a group away, ensure that parents/carers are aware of the following:

- The programme/activities their child is encouraged/expected to participate in, especially high-risk activities e.g. bouldering, canoeing etc.
- Whether there will be shopping trips or other free time in town areas and, if so, the level of supervision during such trips
- The names of leaders/helpers accompanying the group and a contact number (Where possible it is advisable to arrange a pre-residential briefing for the parents, giving information and allowing parents an opportunity to meet the leaders/helpers)
- The centre telephone number and address
- The group's "contract" i.e. what rules the children will be asked to abide by, and possible consequences if these are broken
- What clothes and other items the children might be expected to need
- How much pocket money might be sufficient (it is advisable to set a limit on this)
- That the names and contact details of all children and leaders attending a residential/camp etc will be left with a nominated person in the church.

### *Children*

Children must have parental/carer consent to participate in the residential programme and its named activities. They should be fully informed of the nature of the residential programme, i.e. what is expected of them. They should never be coerced or forced into any activity with which they are uncomfortable. They should be involved in the drawing up of rules and a contract for behaviour and be made aware of sanctions should they fail to comply.

### *Risk Assessment*

Risk assessment will help leaders when planning events, to consider the hazards and risks that the group will come across during the time that the children are in their care.

Remember to inform a nominated person from the congregation of your exact location, contact mobile phone number and home contact numbers in case of emergency for all children and leaders. When the outing or residential is over, leaders should carry out a review and ask what went really well and what could be improved on.

### **Church Sleepovers**

Youth groups are increasingly using church halls as overnight accommodation. Before such a venture is considered, organisers should think through security and safety issues. A risk assessment is recommended.

The following checklist should be used to ensure the accommodation is suitable:

- Parental consent must be sought
- Only ground floor accommodation is considered suitable for sleeping
- There should be appropriate male/female segregation and supervision
- Sleeping accommodation for leaders/helpers and children, where possible, should be separate, but the children's accommodation ought to be easily accessible
- Leaders/helpers must always avoid staying on their own with a young person. There must always be other leaders/helpers or children present
- There should be at least one nominated first aider and a complete first aid box
- The accommodation should be suitable for any child attending who has special needs
- There should be adequate mobile phone reception or a landline
- There should be at least two separate routes leading from the sleeping accommodation and out of the building
- Fire extinguishers should be positioned in appropriate and accessible locations
- Doors should be checked for ease of opening in an emergency
- Exits should be clearly marked and unblocked
- Clear instructions in the event of an evacuation should be given to both children and leaders/helpers.
- Portable heating appliances should not impede exits and should be turned off during sleeping hours
- Leaders/helpers should have torches in case of power failure
- There should be a no smoking, no alcohol, drug free rule applied to the premises
- A record of sleeping arrangements should be kept detailing the names of children and leaders who stayed over and where they slept.

Once these issues have been considered organisers should only proceed if they are confident that the facilities are adequate to meet the needs of the group.

### **Technology**

In order to keep everyone (children, staff and leaders) safe when using technology either at or in relation to activities at Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin, a Technology Policy has been developed.

### **Working with Children who have Special Needs**

The church should be a place where all children and their families are welcome. Groups within the church have a duty to be inclusive and to provide opportunities for children of all abilities and regardless of any medical conditions or disabilities.

#### *Be Informed*

Talk with the parents or carers to find out what a child's specific needs are and how they are normally met at home or at school. Assume nothing and don't be afraid to ask! Some children with special needs may require one-to-one help in a group or organisation; perhaps an extra leader will be needed for this responsibility.

#### *Personal Care*

Children who have a disability can be at greater risk of abuse. They will often require more help with personal care, such as washing, dressing, toileting, feeding, mobility etc, or may have limited understanding and behave in a non-age appropriate way.

If a child needs help with toileting or more intimate care it is important to make sure their dignity is preserved. It is good practice that the same leader as far as possible and the same gender as the child is involved in helping them. A personal care plan can be drawn up by parents/carers to advise leaders on how to best meet the needs of the child. Leaders can complete a personal care log to record how the needs of the child were met each time they attend the group.

#### *Be Inclusive*

As far as possible, try to make sure that all children can participate in the activities that you have organised. Try not to rely on one particular method of teaching. For example, a word search is not a suitable activity for a child who is dyslexic; other children may struggle with running or all games due to poor mobility skills. Biblical teaching can be used to show that we are all different and yet we are all special to god.

### **Managing Offenders**

The church believes that within the context of grace and forgiveness, attendance at worship services is open to everyone. At the same time, the protection of our children must remain paramount at all times. A person who has cautions or convictions on their record may still be involved in the life and witness of the Church. However if a person has convictions of abuse against children then they should never be in a position of leadership with children. If the church is following the guidelines by having all new leaders in regulated positions undergo the vetting procedure, then any convictions will be known through this process.

If it becomes known that a person who has been convicted of offences against children is attending church worship or any church group, the church Governing Body should be contacted. This is not to say they cannot attend but so that advice can be taken to ensure that attendance becomes safe for the protection of the children and others attending church and for the offender themselves. If an offender has restrictions placed upon them from An Garda Síochána or Social Services, the church must work in partnership with these agencies.

## Recognising Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Abuse and neglect can occur within the family, in the community or in an institutional setting. The abuser may be someone known to the child or a stranger, and can be an adult or another child. In a situation where abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, it should be considered child welfare and protection issue for both children and child protection procedures should be followed for both the victim and the alleged abuser.

The important factor in deciding whether the behaviour is abuse or neglect is the impact of that behaviour on the child rather than the intention of the parent/carer.

The definitions of neglect and abuse outlined in Appendix 2 are not legal definitions. They are intended to describe ways in which a child might experience abuse and how this abuse may be recognised.

In dealing with children, staff and leaders need to be alert to the possibility that a welfare or protection concern may arise in relation to children you come in contact with. A child needs to have someone they can trust in order to feel able to disclose abuse they may be experiencing. They need to know that they will be believed and will get the help they need. Without these things, they may be vulnerable to continuing abuse.

Some children may be more vulnerable to abuse than others. Also, there may be particular times or circumstances when a child may be more vulnerable to abuse in their lives. In particular, children with disabilities, children with communication difficulties, children in care or living away from home, or children with a parent or parents with problems in their own lives may be more susceptible to harm.

The following are some of the complicating factors and circumstances which may make children more vulnerable to harm:

- Age of the child
- Domestic and sexual violence
- Parental mental health problems
- Parental substance misuse
- Parental intellectual disability
- Children with disabilities
- Unknown male partners and their history/association with the family
- Families who are 'uncooperative' or 'hard to engage'
- Poverty and social exclusion.

It is important to remember that identifying additional vulnerability does not mean that any specific child in those circumstances or settings is being abused.

Abuse is not always committed through personal contact with a child, sometimes it is perpetrated through social media or the use of information and communication technology.

### Reasonable Grounds for Concern

The reporting procedures set out on page 23 should always be used when staff or leader has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected. If what may be symptoms of abuse are ignored it could result in ongoing harm to the child. It is not necessary to prove that abuse has occurred to report a concern, all that is required is that there are reasonable grounds for concern.

Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern include:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused.

The guiding principles on reporting child abuse or neglect may be summarised as follows:

1. The safety and well-being of the child must take priority over concerns about adults against whom an allegation may be made
2. Reports of concern should be made without delay to the Designated Liaison Person.

### **Responding to a child who discloses abuse**

A child may disclose to staff or leader that they have been or are being harmed or abused. Children will often have different ways of communicating that they are being abused. If a child hints at or tells staff or leader that he or she is being harmed by someone, be it a parent/carers, another adult or by a child (peer abuse), it should be treated in a sensitive way.

Remember, a child may disclose abuse to staff or leader as a trusted adult at any time during their work with them. It is important that staff and leaders are aware and prepared for this.

- Be as calm and natural as possible.
- Remember that you have been approached because you are trusted and possibly liked. Do not panic.
- Be aware that disclosures 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. Give them time and opportunity to tell as much as they are able and wish to.
- Do not pressurise the child. Allow him or her to disclose at their own pace and in their own language.
- Conceal any signs of disgust, anger or disbelief.
- Accept what the child has to say – false disclosures are very rare.
- It is important to differentiate 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 whilst also disliking what was done to them. It is important therefore to avoid expressing any judgement on, or anger towards the alleged perpetrator while talking to 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 they have disclosed.
- Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you.

When asking questions

- Questions should be supportive and for the purpose of clarification only.
- Avoid leading questions, such as asking whether a specific person carried out the abuse. Also, avoid asking about intimate details or suggestion that something else may have happened other than what you have been told. Such questions and suggestions could complicate the official investigation.

Confidentiality – 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.
- You will be sharing this information only with people who understand this area and who can help. 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 on-going 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 and 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.

Think before you promise anything – do not make promises you cannot keep

At the earliest possible opportunity:

- Record in writing, in a factual manner, what the child has said, including, as far as possible, the exact words used by the child.
- Inform the Designated Liaison Person immediately and agree measure to protect the child, e.g. report the matter directly to Tusla.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality.

Ongoing support

Following a disclosure by a child, it is important that the staff and leaders continues in a supportive relationship with the child. Disclosure is a huge step for a child. staff and leaders should continue to offer support, particularly by:

- Maintaining a positive relationship with the child
- Keeping lines of communication open by listening carefully to the child
- Continuing to include the child in the usual activities.

Any further disclosure should be treated as a first disclosure and responded to as indicated above. Where necessary, immediate action should be taken to ensure the child's safety.

## Reporting Procedures

A child will sometimes confide in staff or leader that they have been abused or someone may witness incidents which suggest that a child is being harmed. Often it is a case of staff or leader feeling worried and concerned about certain signs they are picking up on, such as poor hygiene; a child always appearing hungry, listless and tired; a lack of suitable clothing; or unexplained physical injuries. Other indicators may be related to the child's behaviour such as being aggressive, impulsive, or withdrawn. A cluster or pattern of signs is more likely to be indicative of abuse or neglect.

If staff or leader has any of the above concerns or has seen or heard anything else which causes them concern about a child, they have a responsibility to safeguarding children and report those concerns by contacting a member of the Designated Liaison Person and completing the Internal Reporting Form giving as much detail as possible about the concern. The Internal Reporting Form should be returned as soon as possible to the Designated Liaison Person. It is important to note the report should be factual and include all details available to the staff or leader in relation to the child and their concerns.

On receipt of any concern the Designated Liaison Person, in consultation with the staff or leader who raised the concern, will expediently assess the information and decide if reasonable grounds for concern exist. The Designated Liaison Person, as mandated persons, also has the responsibility to assess the information, in line with the Mandated Reporting Threshold Decision Process and decide whether the concern reaches or exceeds the threshold for harm to necessitate a mandated report. The concern raised must be assessed by the Designated Liaison Person in relation to both levels of report, if the concern does not meet the threshold for harm but does meet the reasonable grounds for concern it should be reported. The Designated Liaison Person will make a record of their decision as to whether a report should be made and at what level and the basis for such decision.

The Designated Liaison Person should contact the parents/guardians and speak to them about the concern that has been raised in relation to their child and inform them that a report is being submitted to Tusla. This should be done in a sensitive and caring manner and should be done in line with the best practice guidelines contained in Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice. However the Designated Liaison Person will not inform the parents of the decision to report a concern to Tusla, if they feel that by doing so might further endanger the child, impair Tusla's ability to carry out a risk assessment or put themselves or the staff or leader at risk of harm.

If reasonable grounds for concern exist the Designated Liaison Person will, without delay, contact the Duty Social Staff at Tusla and make a verbal report and complete a Child Protection and Welfare Report form based on information held by Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin on the child in question and the information provided by the staff or leader on the Internal Reporting Form and forward same to Tusla. If concern meets or exceeds the threshold for harm, the Designated Liaison Person will indicate on the Child Protection and Welfare Report form that this is a mandated report.

If the Designated Liaison Person is unsure if the concern meets the reasonable grounds for concern or meets or exceeds the threshold of harm to warrant a mandated report, they should contact the Duty Social Staff at Tusla and seek advice as to whether a report should be made and at what level. Where the Duty Social Staff advises that the concern does not meet the reasonable grounds for concern, the Designated Liaison Person will inform the staff or leader of the advice received and advise the staff or leader to continue to monitor and support the child and if any further concerns arise to inform the Designated Liaison Person. A record of the initial concern will be placed in the Child Protection files of Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin by the Designated Liaison Person.

It is important that should future concerns be raised by staff or leader in relation to the same child, the Designated Liaison Person should assess the information on all records held in the Child Protection file on that child, in addition to the new concern, when deciding whether reasonable grounds for concern are met or the threshold of harm is met or exceeded and a report to Tusla is needed.

If the Designated Liaison Person decides not to report a concern to Tusla, the following steps should be taken:

- The reasons for not reporting should be recorded
- Any action taken as a result of the concern should be recorded
- The staff or leader who raised the concern should be given a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported to Tusla
- The staff or leader should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to Tusla or An Garda Síochana personally.
- The staff or leader who raised the concern should also be reassured that if they do choose to further pursue the matter, they are covered by the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998.

In the event of an emergency, where it is considered that the child is in imminent danger, or the non-availability of a duty social staff, the Designated Liaison Person should report to An Garda Síochana.

The Designated Liaison Person should also consider if the concern should also be reported to An Garda Síochana in line with the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.



## **Mandated Reporting and Assisting**

In Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin there are a number of mandated persons who are required under the Children First Act 2015 to report any concern that meets or exceeds the threshold for reporting under the legislation.

Where a mandated person has a concern that they believe that meets the threshold for a mandated report, they should report the matter to the Designated Liaison Person and a joint mandated report be made to Tusla. The Designated Liaison Person cannot make the report independently of the mandated person as the mandated person must discharge their duty under the Children First Act 2015, the report can be made jointly to allow everyone discharge their duty.

Where a mandated person has a concern that they believe does not reach the threshold for a mandated report, they should report that concern to the Designated Liaison Person to allow them to consider whether the concerns meets reasonable grounds for concern and a non-mandated report needs to be made to Tusla..

Under the Children First Act 2015 there is also a statutory requirement for mandated persons to assist Tusla in the assessment of risk of mandated reports, where requested to do so. Where such a request is received, the mandated person must provide such assistance as is required. Tusla accepts the time limitations and pressures on other professional and will use mandated assisting only when necessary and only to the extent needed by each specific case.

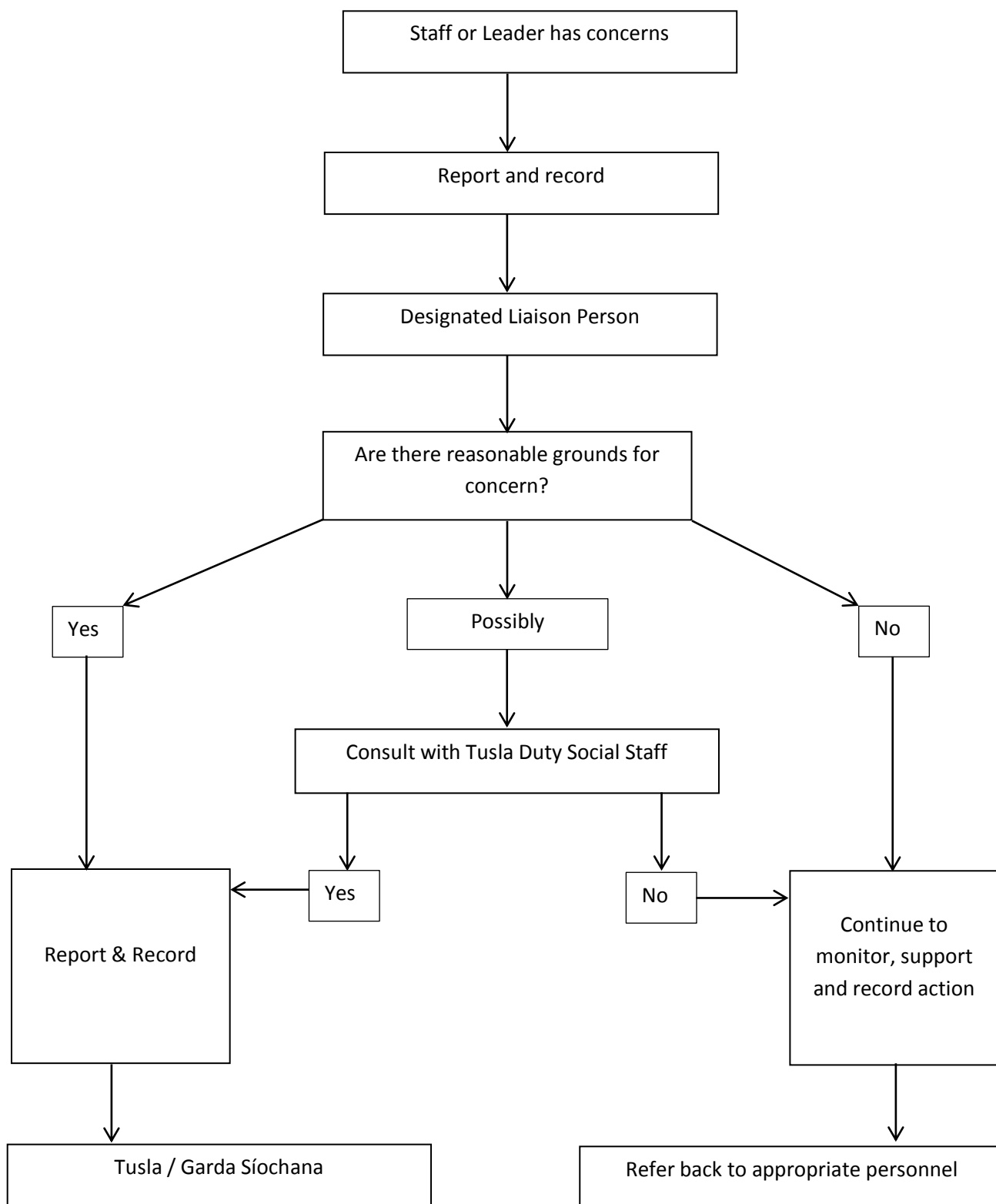
Whilst a number of leaders within Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin may be mandated persons in their professional capacity, the legal obligation to report under the Children First Act 2015 only applies to information that they acquire in the course of their professional work or employment and does not apply to information they acquire outside of their professional capacity or information given to them on the basis of the personal relationship. Therefore they are not mandated persons in their capacity as leaders within Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin.

## **Anonymity**

Designated Liaison Persons cannot report anonymously. Similarly, mandated persons may not report anonymously as to do so does not discharge the statutory obligations for a mandated person under the Children First Act 2015.

Tusla will respect the wishes of non-professionals reporting concerns in good faith who ask to remain anonymous as much as possible, but cannot give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The Data Protection Acts and Freedom of Information Acts allow the withholding of information in certain circumstances, however, should the information be directly sought within legal proceedings, there is no guarantee it will not be released.

## Reporting Procedures



## Dealing with allegations against staff or leader and children

### Allegation against a staff or leader

An allegation of abuse may relate to a staff or leader who works with children in Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin who has:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence in relation to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they may pose a risk to a child
- Behaved in a way that is contrary to Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin Code of Behaviour for staff or leaders.

If an allegation is made against a staff or leader, Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin has a dual responsibility in relation to the child and the staff or leader. There are two separate procedures to be followed:

- The reporting procedure to Tusla in respect of the child and the alleged abuser;
- The internal personnel procedure for dealing with the staff or leader.

On receipt of an allegation against a staff or leader, the Designated Liaison Person shall follow the reporting procedures laid out on page 23 and if making a formal report to Tusla advise them that the report is in relation to a staff or leader in the organisation. This will allow Tusla to apply the necessary policies and procedures in relation to allegations against staffs or leaders in organisations. In addition, they shall advise the Governing Body that an allegation has been made against a staff or leader and the Governing Body shall undertake the internal personnel procedure.

The first priority is to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. The Governing Body should as a matter of urgency take any necessary protective measures. These measures should be proportionate to the level of risk and should not unreasonably penalise the staff or leader, financially or otherwise, unless necessary to protect children. Where protective measures penalise the staff or leader, it is important that early consideration be given to the case.

Any action taken should be guided by agreed procedures, the applicable employment contract and the rules of natural justice.

The Governing Body should privately inform the staff or leader of the following:

- (i) the fact that an allegation has been made against him or her;
- (ii) the nature of the allegation.

The staff or leader should be afforded an opportunity to respond. The Governing Body should note the response and pass on this information if making a formal report to Tusla. The staff or leader should be offered the option of have representation at this stage and should be informed that any response may be shared with Tusla.

The Governing Body should take care to ensure that actions taken by them do not undermine or frustrate any investigations/ assessments conducted by Tusla or An Garda Síochána. To this end it is strongly recommended that the Governing Body maintain a close liaison with the statutory authorities to ensure this.

The requirements of fair procedure and natural justice mean that Tusla usually will not share the details of any assessment regarding allegations of abuse against a staff or leader until the staff or leader has had the opportunity to fully respond to the allegation and any findings and decisions of Tusla

The Designated Liaison Person and the Governing Body should be notified of the outcome of an investigation and/or assessment by Tusla. This will assist them in reaching a decision about the action to be taken in the longer term concerning the staff or leader.

### Allegation against a child

In a situation where child abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the standard reporting procedures (see page 23) will be followed. If an allegation, suspicion or concern of peer abuse is made against a child and meets the reasonable grounds for concern, this should be reported by the Designated Liaison Person indicating that it is a case of suspected peer abuse so that Tusla can put procedures in place for both the victim and the alleged abuser, as it would be considered a child protection and welfare issue for both children.

If the allegation meets or exceeds the threshold of harm, the Designated Liaison Person should indicate on the report to Tusla that the report is a mandated report.

## **Dealing with disclosure by an adult of childhood abuse**

There are an increasing number of adults disclosing abuse that took place during their childhood. Where such a disclosure is made it is essential to establish whether there may be current risk to any child who may be in contact with the alleged abuser revealed in the disclosure. This is important even where the children about whom there may be a concern are still to be identified.

Some adults disclosing abuse may not choose to personally come forward to report their concerns about children who may be currently at risk.

If any risk is deemed to exist to a child who may be in contact with an alleged abuser, the Designated Liaison Person should be informed and they should follow the reporting procedures laid out on page 23 and report the allegation to Tusla without delay. The Retrospective Abuse Report Form should be used to make such a report to Tusla rather than the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form.

If staff or leader or mandated person is unsure about whether to report or not, they should contact the Designated Liaison Person who can consult with the Tusla Duty Social Staff in relation to the concern and seek advice as to whether a report should be made or not.

Reports by adults of childhood abuse will be assessed by Tusla. If there are on-going child protection concerns Tusla will take necessary actions to ensure any child may be at risk of harm is protected.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Designated Liaison Person

It is the role and responsibility of the Designated Liaison Persons to:

- Be fully familiar with Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin's duties to the safeguarding of children
- Have a good knowledge of Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin's guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures.
- Ensure that Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin's reporting procedure is followed, so that child protection and welfare concerns are referred promptly to Tusla.
- Receive child protection and welfare concerns from coaches and parents and consider if reasonable grounds for reporting to Tusla exist.
- Consult informally with a Tusla Duty Social Worker if necessary.
- Where appropriate, make a formal report of a child protection or welfare concern to Tusla on behalf of Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin, using the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form.
- Inform the child's parents/guardians that a report is to be submitted to Tusla or An Garda Síochana, unless
  - Informing the parents/guardians is likely to endanger the child;
  - Informing the parents/guardians may place you as the reporter at risk of harm from the family;
  - The family's knowledge of the report could impair Tusla's ability to carry out an assessment.
- Record all concerns or allegations of child abuse brought to your attention as well as any action/inaction taken in response to these concerns.
- Provide feedback to the referrer, as appropriate.
- Advise the Governing Body on individual cases within the limits of confidentiality;
- Ensure that a secure system is in place to manage confidential records.
- Act as a liaison with Tusla and An Garda Síochana, as appropriate;
- Advise on best practice;
- Organise and facilitate training on Child Safeguarding;
- Keep up to date on current developments regarding provision, practice, support services, legal obligations/requirements and policy and attend relevant meetings and undertake training as necessary;
- Undertake the recruitment process and bring names of new leaders who have completed the recruitment process satisfactorily to the Governing Body. Maintain personnel records for all leaders in the Organisation.

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person role is to support the Designated Liaison Person and carry out the duties of the Designated Liaison Person when they are not available to do so.

### Contact Details for Designated Liaison Person

**Designated Liaison Person**

**Miranda Chan**

**087 0994249**

### Mandated Persons

The Designated Liaison Person of Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin shall maintain a list of all mandated persons within organisation and will update this list every quarter.

The Designated Liaison Person as a mandated person shall make a mandated report to Tusla of any child protection or welfare concerns which meet or exceed the thresholds set out in Children First and to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports, where requested to do so. The Designated Liaison Person shall make a joint mandated report to Tusla along with another

other mandated person in Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin who has a child protection or welfare concern which meets or exceeds the thresholds set out in Children First and cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports, where requested to do so.

### **Relevant Person**

The Designated Liaison Person has been appointed as the relevant person for Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin and is the first point of contact in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement.

## Complaints

If a child or parent/carer has a general complaint about the running of a group, such complaints will be dealt with through the Complaints Policy. The complainant should be assured that the matter will be dealt with in a prompt and appropriate manner. They should be informed as soon as possible of the decisions and the action, if any, that will be taken.

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality is about managing sensitive information that arises in a trusting relationship and doing so in a manner that is respectful, professional and purposeful.

Youth and children's ministry is based upon trusting relationships and the sharing by children to staff and leaders of personal information and problems is not uncommon. Anyone, staff/leader/child, disclosing information in this context needs to know in advance the limits of confidentiality and the responsibilities attached.

In matters of child abuse a staff member or leader can never promise to keep secret any information that is divulged. A staff member or leader should explain to the child disclosing why s/he cannot keep this information secret and also explain to the child what h/she intends to do with the information. Every effort should be made to get the child to understand this strategy and consent to it. Those working with a child and family should make this clear to all parties involved.

**There is an obligation and duty on the person receiving this information to act in accordance with the Church's Child Safeguarding Policy.**

All information regarding concern or assessment of child abuse should be shared on a "*need to know basis*" in the best interest of the child. Sharing information with an appropriate / designated person (Designated Liaison Person, Tusla personnel or An Garda Síochána) for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality. It must be clearly understood that information, which is gathered for one purpose must not be used for another, without consulting the person who provided that information.

## Information sharing

Good communication is good practice. If the church puts in place good systems and provides opportunities for sharing information with children, parents, staff, leaders, everyone will feel that their input is valued and that their ideas and concerns will be listened to. A sense of partnership between parents, staff, leaders and children will engender mutual trust.

To this end Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin has developed a Communications Policy and a Policy on Working in Partnership with Parents/Guardians.

## Record keeping, access and storage of information

### ***Child Safeguarding records***

The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for keeping the following records relating the Child Safeguarding Policy in a locked fire-proof filing cabinet.

- Any disclosures, concerns or allegations of child abuse.
- Records relating to disclosures, concerns or allegations of abuse including reports from staff or leaders, reports to Tusla, including informal advice from the Tusla, informing parents/guardians, reports to Gardaí, advice given to staff or leaders.
- Any complaints about the safety and welfare of children while under the supervision of Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin.
- Any protective measures or action taken by the Governing Body in relation to an allegation against a staff member or leader.
- Any actions taken by the Governing Body in response to a complaint against a staff member.

The Designated Liaison Person is the only person who has access to these records.

The Designated Liaison Person will review all Child Protection records regularly and keep them updated. The Designated Liaison Person shall report to on a regular basis to the Governing Body of Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin on Child Safeguarding matters without revealing any details of individual cases unless the situation so warrants.

All Child Safeguarding records will be held by Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin in perpetuity.

### ***Personnel records***

Personnel records for all worker/volunteers including Application forms, Declaration Form, notes from interviews, Reference forms, Garda Vetting and Declaration of Acceptance shall be kept secured at all times..

The Designated Liaison Person is the only person who will have access to these records. Individual staff members or leaders may request in writing to see the information held relating to them.

These records will be updated regularly with information from the support meetings held with staff and workers.

All personnel records will be held by Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin in perpetuity.

### ***Organisation records***

A Parental Consent form should be completed for each child at the beginning of each year providing personal details, any special needs, any medical conditions, emergency contact details, photograph consent.

An activity consent form should be completed for each child going on any outings or trips away.

Each group should maintain attendance records detailing the children and the staff and leaders in attendance on a weekly basis.

All accidents and incidents will be recorded on the Accident/Incident Report form and submitted to the [church office for filing in the locked filing cabinet](#) [Designated Liaison Person for retention](#).

The consent forms and attendance records for each group will be held by the leader in charge of each group for the period they pertain to and after that period the consent forms and attendance records will be given to the Designated Liaison Person to put into the locked filing cabinet and only the Designated Liaison Person will have access to them after that.



All organisation records will be held in hard copy in the Church office for a period of five years after such time they will be converted to electronic format and stored in perpetuity on external hard drive. The Governing Body shall approve all conversions of documentation to electronic format.

### ***Storage of information***

Any data storage utilised by Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin shall:

- ensure that the basic principles of data protection are in place
- follow document procedures, for example with regard to accuracy, and have regular security reviews
- adhere to the 'need to know principle' - only personal data necessary for the purpose should be collected and staff and leaders should only be able to access the personal data that they need to carry out their functions
- have adequate access controls, firewalls and virus protection if material is stored in electronic form
- keep manual files in locked cabinets with restricted access as detailed above.

**NB** The careful handling of information should not inhibit the availability of necessary information about children.

### ***Data protection***

The Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 create obligations for those keeping personal information and gives individuals rights regarding information which concerns them.

Automated data means information that (a) is being processed by means of equipment operating automatically in response to instructions given for that purpose, or (b) is recorded with the intention that it should be processed by means of such equipment. Manual data means information that is recorded as part of a relevant filing system or with the intention that it should form part of a relevant filing system.

The Data Protection Act 2003 extends the remit of data protection to manual searchable files, that is, information stored on paper, with effect from October 2007.

Details are to be found on  
[www.dataprotection.ie](http://www.dataprotection.ie) the site of the Data Commissioner.

## **Vulnerable Persons**

Everyone should be treated with respect and dignity. There are many adults in the church family, both young and old, who are vulnerable, and they should feel that the church provides a place of safety and cares for them. Others may become vulnerable for a limited time, following a medical procedure or accident.

Who is a Vulnerable Person?

A vulnerable person is anyone aged 18 or over who is suffering from a disorder of the mind, whether as a result of mental illness or dementia; or has an intellectual disability; or is suffering from a physical impairment, which is as a result of injury, illness or age; or has a physical disability; which is of such a nature or degree as to restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against harm by another person or that results in the person requiring assistance with the activities of daily living including dressing, eating, walking, washing and bathing.

Vulnerable persons may not be able to protect themselves against significant harm or unfair treatment. Because of this, these adults may receive a care service in their own home or in the community. They may live in a residential care home, nursing home or a similar setting.

What is Adult Abuse?

Adult abuse can take a number of forms and cause victims to suffer pain, fear and distress. Victims may be too afraid or embarrassed to raise any complaint. They may be reluctant to discuss their concerns with other people, or unsure who to trust. There may be some situations where victims are unaware that they are being abused or have difficulty in communicating this to others.

Protection for Vulnerable Persons

What to do if adult abuse is suspected? It is important that if suspected, adult abuse is reported as soon as possible to An Garda Síochána or Health Service Executive.

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 sets out that organisations that provide services to vulnerable person must ensure that they hold a vetting disclosure before allowing any staff or leaders to commence working with vulnerable persons.

## APPENDIX 1

### RELEVANT LEGISLATION

There are a number of key pieces of legislation that relate to child welfare and protection. The information here gives a brief overview of relevant legislation.

#### CHILD CARE ACT 1991

This is a key piece of legislation which regulates child care policy in Ireland. Under this Act, Tusla has a statutory responsibility to promote the welfare of children who are not receiving adequate care and protection. If it is found that a child is not receiving adequate care and protection, Tusla has a duty to take appropriate action to promote the welfare of the child. This may include supporting families in need of assistance in providing care and protection to their children. The Child Care Act also sets out the statutory framework for taking children into care, if necessary.

#### PROTECTION FOR PERSONS REPORTING CHILD ABUSE ACT 1998

This Act protects you if you make a report of suspected child abuse to designated officers of Tusla, the Health Service Executive (HSE) or to members of the Gardai as long as the report is made in good faith and is not malicious. Designated officers also include persons authorised by the Chief Executive Officer of Tusla to receive and acknowledge reports of mandated concerns about a child from mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015.

This legal protection means that even if you report a case of suspected child abuse and it proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that you had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report. If you make a report in good faith and in the child's best interests, you may also be protected under common law by the defence of qualified privilege. You can find the full list of persons in Tusla and the HSE who are designated officers under the 1998 Act, on the website of each agency ([www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie) and [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)).

#### CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT 2006

Section 176 of this Act created an offence of reckless endangerment of children. This offence may be committed by a person who had authority or control over a child or abuser who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by:

1. Causing or permitting the child to be placed or left in a situation that creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse; or
2. Failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation.

#### CRIMINAL JUSTICE (WITHHOLDING OF INFORMATION ON OFFENCES AGAINST CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS) ACT 2012

Under this Act, it is a criminal offence to withhold information about a serious offence, including sexual offence, against a person under 18 years or a vulnerable person. The offence arises where a person knows or believes that a specified offence has been committed against a child or vulnerable person and he or she has information which would help arrest, prosecute or convict another person for that offence, but fails without reasonable excuse to disclose that information, as soon as it is practicable to do so, to a member of An Garda Síochána.

The provisions of the Withholding legislation are in addition to any reporting requirements under the Children First Act 2015.

#### NATIONAL VETTING BUREAU (CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS) ACTS 2012-2016

Under these Acts, it is compulsory for employers to obtain vetting disclosures in relation to anyone who is carrying out relevant work with children or vulnerable adults. The Acts create offences and penalties for persons who fail to comply with their provisions. Statutory obligations on employers in relation to Garda vetting requirements for persons working with children and vulnerable adults are set out in the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016.

#### CHILDREN FIRST ACT 2015

The Children First Act 2015 is an important addition to the child welfare and protection system as it will help to ensure that child protection concerns are brought to the attention of Tusla without delay. The Act provides for mandatory reporting of child welfare and protection concerns by key professionals; comprehensive risk assessment and planning for a strong organisational culture of safeguarding in all services provided to children; provision for a register of non-compliance; and the statutory underpinning of the existing Children First Interdepartmental Implementation Group which promotes and oversees cross-sectoral implementation and compliance with Children First.

#### CRIMINAL LAW (SEXUAL OFFENCES) ACT 2017

This Act addresses the sexual exploitation of children and targets those who engage in this criminal activity. It creates offences relating to the obtaining or providing of children for the purposes of sexual exploitation. It also creates offences of the types of activity which may occur during the early stages of the predatory process prior to the actual exploitation of a child, for example, using modern technology to prey on children and making arrangements to meet with a child where the intention is to sexually exploit the child. The Act also recognises the existence of underage, consensual peer relationships where any sexual activity falls within the strictly defined age limits and the relationship is not intimidatory or exploitative.

## APPENDIX 2

### DEFINITIONS AND SIGNS OF ABUSE

#### NEGLECT

Child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. Ongoing chronic neglect is recognised as being extremely harmful to the development and well-being of the child and may have serious long-term negative consequences.

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of a n omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties. The extent of the damage to the child's health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include the extent, if any, of positive influences in the child's life as well as the age of the child and the frequency and consistency of neglect.

Neglect is associated with poverty but not necessarily caused by it. It is strongly linked to parental substance misuse, domestic violence, and parental mental illness and disability.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. This may become apparent where you see the child over a period of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child one.

The following are feature of child neglect:

- Children left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. A child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions - unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Inattention to basic hygiene
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age.
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Abandonment or desertion

#### EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationships between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:

- Rejection
- Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. Fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. Frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviour or actions
- Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. Locking child in bedroom)
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development

There may be no physical signs of emotional abuse unless it occurs with another type of abuse. A child may show signs of emotional abuse through their actions or emotions in several ways. These include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk taking and aggressive behaviour.

It should be noted that no one indicator is conclusive evidence of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is more likely to impact negatively on a child where it is persistent over time and where there is a lack of other protective factors.

### PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health or development is, or may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

The Children First Act 2015 includes a provision that abolishes the common laws defence of reasonable chastisement in court proceedings. This defence could previously be invoked by a parent or other person in authority who physically disciplined a child. The change in the legislation now means that in prosecutions relating to assault or physical cruelty, a person who administers such punishment to a child cannot rely on the defence of reasonable chastisement in the legal proceedings. The result of this is that the protections in law relating to assault now apply to a child in the same way as they do to an adult.

### SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and in some instances occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members.

Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or his or her siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms.

It should be remembered that sexual activity involving a young person may be sexual abuse even if the young person concerned does not themselves recognise it as abusive.

Examples of sexual abuse include the following:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:
  - Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography [for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purposes of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means]
  - Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act
  - Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse
- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person

An Garda Síochána will deal with any criminal aspects of a sexual abuse case under the relevant criminal justice legislation. The prosecution of a sexual offence against a child will be considered within the wider objective of child welfare and protection. The safety of the child is paramount and at no stage should a child's safety be compromised because of concern for the integrity of a criminal investigation.

In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that in criminal law the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. Any sexual relationship where one or both parties are under the age of 17 is illegal. However, it may not be regarded as child sexual abuse.

### Welfare

The Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook defines a child welfare concern as "a problem experienced directly by a child, or the family of a child, that is seen to impact negatively on the child's health, development and welfare, and that warrants assessment and support, but may not require a child protection response".

**Appendix 3:****Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin  
Parental Consent Form**

Anything that is written on this form will be held in confidence. We need to know this information to meet your child's requirements and to ensure that they are in as safe an environment as possible.

Please read this form carefully and fill in all sections. Complete one form per child and tick the appropriate box for the programmes that your child attends.

<u>Programme/s</u>	Tick
Language School	
Sunday School	
WOW	
Kidnetics	
Nursery	
Dance Classes	

Child's First name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Child's Email (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Mobile Telephone number (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ School year \_\_\_\_\_ DOB- \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

**Contacts**

Emergency Contact 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Details of any medical conditions, allergies (e.g.- asthma, diabetes, epilepsy etc) \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate what symptoms will be displayed relevant to any allergies or condition and how best to respond to these symptoms: \_\_\_\_\_

Any medication that may need to be administered and is the child able to do that themselves? \_\_\_\_\_

Any other needs that the leaders need to be made aware of? \_\_\_\_\_

PHOTOS AND VIDEOS: during the year photos/videos maybe taken of your child connected with the activities that they attend. These may be used for feedback within the church, church website, brochures or other church material

(Tick the appropriate)

I give permission for photographs to be taken for the above purposes

☐

I don't give permission

☐

Do you give permission for your child to be contacted via text messages, emails, Facebook regarding Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin children's activities? (Circle option)      Yes      No

Would you like to receive a copy of Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin's Child Safeguarding Policy? (circle)  
Yes   No

I give permission for my child to attend all of the organisations ticked above and to participate in all their activities.

I will inform the leaders of any important changes to my child's health, medication or needs.

In the event of illness or accident, having parental responsibility for the above named child, I give permission for first aid to be administered when considered necessary by a trained first aider, if available, and/or medical treatment to be administered by a suitably qualified medical practitioner.

If I cannot be contacted and my child should require emergency hospital treatment, I authorise an adult leader to sign on my behalf any written form of consent required by the hospital. However, I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible.

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the above details are correct.

Parent/Guardian's name printed in full: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**I will notify the Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin immediately of any changes to the information provided on this form.**

Appendix 4:

## Chinese Gospel Church Outing Form

***Please complete this form and return it to the Leader in Charge of Group***

**A signed consent form is a condition of participation in this activity for those under the age of 18 years**

Child's name .....

Age ..... Date of Birth .....

GP name and telephone .....

Parents emergency contact numbers .....

I am willing for *(child's name)* ..... to participate in *(activity)* .....  
and confirm that he/she is willing to participate as fully as possible.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Furthermore, I permit *(Child's name)* ..... to travel on transport that has been designated as official for the purpose of this event (e.g. minibus/coach/private vehicle).

*Please tick one of the following.*

Yes ☐ No ☐

*(Child's name)* ..... has the following medical condition(s) and requires the following medication and/or special diet:

.....

.....

I confirm that I have given my consent for my child to attend *[event title]* .....  
..... to be held on *[date]* ..... In the event of her being taken ill or injured during the period of the *[event/title]* ..... so that surgical operation or serum injection becomes necessary, I hereby authorise the leader in charge to sign on my behalf any written forms of consent required, provided that the delay necessitated to obtain my signature might endanger her health or safety.

Parent/guardian signature ..... Date .....

***Consent must be provided by the person with parental responsibility***

## Volunteer Application Form

**Confidential**

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Forename \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel No. \_\_\_\_\_

Are you (please tick)

Employed\_\_\_\_ Unemployed\_\_\_\_ Student

Homemaker\_\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_

**Do you have any relevant childcare/ Youth work or related qualifications?**

**Please indicate:-**

\_\_\_\_\_

When completed\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When completed\_\_\_\_\_

**Work experience-**

(Please indicate most recent employer, and dates and duration of all previous employment)

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Your position: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Please attach additional sheets for further information if required)

**Have you been involved in voluntary work previously?** Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If yes, give details

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**Any other relevant information?**

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**Please provide names and addresses of two people whom we could contact for a reference (not a relative or a member of your family)**

**If voluntary work has been undertaken previously please include the name of the last group and contact person you volunteered with.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel No. \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Worker/Volunteer Declaration Form

## Confidential

### DECLARATION FORM FOR ALL WORKERS AND VOLUNTERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_ Forename: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Any other name previously known by: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound Over Order?

Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s):

**Nature of offence**

**Date of Offence**

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Garda vetting will be sought for any applicant offered this post)

# Worker/Volunteer Reference Form

## Confidential

\_\_\_\_\_ Has applied for a position with Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin and has given your name as a referee.

This post/volunteer work involves substantial access to children and as an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of children, we are anxious to know if you have any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children?

Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence.

If you are happy to complete this reference, all information contained on the form will remain confidential and will only be shared with the applicant's immediate supervisor, should they be offered a position. We would appreciate you being candid in your evaluation of this person.

How long have you known this person? \_\_\_\_\_

In what capacity? \_\_\_\_\_

What attributes does this person have which you would consider makes them suitable for working with children?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How would you describe their personality?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please rate this person on the following (please tick)

	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Responsibility					
Maturity					
Ability to work positively with children					
Ability to work with colleagues					
Energy					
Trustworthiness					
Reliability					

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Guidelines for completing Paper Vetting Invitation Form**

Please read the following guidelines before completing this form.

### **Miscellaneous**

The Form must be completed in full using **BLOCK CAPITALS** and writing must be clear and legible.

The Form should be completed in ball point pen.

Photocopies will not be accepted, you must return a signed form.

All applicants will be required to provide documents to validate their identity.

If the applicant is under 18 years of age, a completed NVB 3 - Parent\Guardian Consent Form will be required.

### **Personal Details**

Insert details for each field, allowing one block letter per box.

For Date of Birth field, allow one digit per box.

Please fill in your Email Address, allowing one character/symbol per box.

Please allow one digit per box for your contact number.

The Current Address means the address you are now living at.

The address fields should be completed in full, including Eircode/Postcode. No abbreviations.

### **Role Being Vetted For**

The role being applied for must be clearly stated. Generic terms such as “Volunteer” will not suffice.

### **Declaration of Application**

The applicant must confirm their understanding and acceptance of the two statements by signing the application form at Section 2 and ticking the box provided.

**The affiliate is required to retain this form along with two photocopies of ID on file for the duration of time that the vetting subject is engaged with the organisation.**



[illegible][illegible]

D	D	/	M	M	/	Y	Y	Y	Y
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

[illegible]

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[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

\_\_\_\_\_

DD / MM / YYYY

## DECLARATION BY WORKER/VOLUNTEER FROM ABROAD

1. **Whether in your present country of residence or elsewhere**, have you ever been investigated in respect of or charged with or convicted of a criminal offence or have you ever been the subject of a court order binding you over to keep the peace or have you ever been subject to criminal proceedings in which the court has found the charge or charges against you to have been proved but in respect of which the Probation Act (or any foreign equivalent thereof) has been applied, or are you at present subject to any criminal charges or criminal investigation?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(If yes give details on separate sheet)

2. Have you ever committed any criminal act or been engaged in any criminal conduct for which you have not been prosecuted, whether in your present country of residence or elsewhere?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(If yes give details on separate sheet)

3. Has any court in your present or any other jurisdiction ever found you liable for a civil offence?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(If yes give details on separate sheet)

4. Have you been placed on a sex offenders' register **in your present or any other jurisdiction?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

(If yes give details on separate sheet)

***I the undersigned, who have applied to work as:***

.....

***\*\*write in this space the actual office/position for which you are applying***

***do hereby certify and warrant that in completing this form and in furnishing all the information contained herein or attached hereto, I am doing so in good faith and I further certify and warrant that all such information is true and accurate and constitutes a full disclosure of all material facts known to me.***

Signed.....

Full name (BLOCK CAPITALS).....

Date.....

When completed and signed, return this form to: .....

**DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE  
OF CHINESE GOSPEL CHURCH OF DUBLIN  
*CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY*  
AND A “DUTY OF CARE”**

**Declaration**

I have attended a training event which has introduced me to the Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin’s Child Safeguarding Policy and the recommended procedures to be followed when working with children have been explained to me.

**I acknowledge receipt of the Child Safeguarding Policy and declare I will uphold the same in the position I have accepted with Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin.**

**I further state that I shall exercise a duty of care for any children in my charge.**

Name (*print*).....

Signed .....

Date.....

***NB*** *This declaration is to be retained by the Designated Liaison Person.*

## Appendix 6: Sample of Accident / Incident Form.

This form should be completed immediately after any accident or incident. Once completed, please store confidentially on church premises and keep indefinitely. The worker should discuss with the Pastor if follow up action is required.

Day:	Date:	Time:
Name, contact details and ages of those involved in the accident / incident:		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
Where did this accident / incident take place?		
Who is normally responsible for the group? (Name, Address and telephone number)		
Who witnessed the accident / incident? Names, addresses, telephone numbers and ages if under 16).		
Describe the accident / incident. (Include injuries received and any first aid or medical treatment given)		

Have you retained any defective equipment?		YES/NO
If so, where is it being kept and by whom?		
What action have you taken to prevent a recurrence of the accident / incident?		
Is the site or premises still safe for your group to use?		YES / NO
Is the equipment still safe for your group to use		YES / NO
Have the parents / carers been informed?		YES / NO
By Whom:		
Date:	Time:	
Has the Designated Liaison Person been informed?	YES/ NO	BY WHOM
Has Pastor been informed?	YES / NO	BY WHOM
Has Leader in charge been informed?	YES / NO	BY WHOM
Signature of person in charge of group at time of accident / incident		
Signed:	PRINT Name:	Date:
Form seen by Pastor / Leader in Charge		
Signed:	PRINT Name:	Date:

# National contacts for Tusla Social Workers

Area	Address	Telephone No.
<b>DUBLIN NORTH</b>	Child and Family Agency, 180 – 189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, County Dublin	(01) 8708000
<b>DUBLIN NORTH CITY</b>	Child and Family Agency, Health Centre, Wellmount Park, Finglas, Dublin 11	(01) 8567704
<b>DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL</b>	Child and Family Agency, Bridge House, Cherry Orchard Hospital, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10	076 6955749
<b>DUBLIN SOUTH EAST</b>	Child and Family Agency, Unit 9 Nutgrove Retail Park, Churchtown, Dublin 14	(01) 9213400
<b>DUBLIN SOUTH WEST</b>	Child and Family Agency, St Mary's Craddockstown Road, Naas, County Kildare	(045) 882400
<b>CARLOW</b>	Child and Family Agency, Yellow House, Wester Road, Clonmel, County Tipperary	(052) 6177302
<b>CAVAN</b>	Child and Family Agency, Support Services Building, Rooskey, Monaghan	(047) 30475
<b>WEST CAVAN</b>	Child and Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack Street, Sligo	(071) 9155133
<b>CLARE</b>	Child and Family Agency, Unit 3, St Camillus Hospital, Shelbourne Road, Limerick	(061) 588688
<b>CORK</b>	Child and Family Agency, Referrals Section, Floor 2, Blackpool, Co. Cork	(021) 4927000
<b>DONEGAL</b>	Child and Family Agency, Millennium Court, Pearse Road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal	(074) 9123672
<b>GALWAY</b>	Child and Family Agency, 25 Newcastle Road, Galway, Co. Galway	(091) 546235
<b>KERRY</b>	Child and Family Agency, Rathass, Tralee, Co. Kerry	(066) 7184501
<b>KILDARE</b>	Child and Family Agency, St Mary's Craddockstown Road, Naas, Co. Kildare	(045) 882400
<b>KILKENNY</b>	Child and Family Agency, Yellow House, Wester Road, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.	(052) 6177302
<b>LIMERICK</b>	Child and Family Agency, Unit 3, St Camillus Hospital, Shelbourne Road, Co. Limerick	(061) 588688
<b>LAOIS</b>	Child and Family Agency, Athlone Health Centre, Coosan Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath	(0906) 483106
<b>LEITRIM</b>	Child and Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack Street, Sligo	(071) 9155133
<b>LONGFORD</b>	Child and Family Agency, Athlone Health Centre, Coosan Road, Athlone, County Westmeath	(0906) 483106

<b>LOUTH</b>	Child and Family Agency, Meath Enterprise Centre, Trim Road, Navan, Co. Meath	(046) 9098560
<b>MAYO</b>	Child and Family Agency, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Mill Lane, Bridge Street, Castlebar, Co. Mayo	(094) 9042284
<b>MEATH</b>	Child and Family Agency, Meath Enterprise Centre, Trim Road, Navan, County Meath	(046) 9098560
<b>MONAGHAN</b>	Child and Family Agency, Support Services Buidling, Rooskey, Monaghan	(047) 30475
<b>OFFALY</b>	Child and Family Agency, Athlone Health Centre, Coosan Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath	(0906) 483106
<b>ROSCOMMON</b>	Child and Family Agency, 25 Newcastle Road, Galway	(091) 546235
<b>SLIGO</b>	Child and Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack Street, Sligo, Co. Sligo	(071) 915 5133
<b>NORTH TIPPERARY</b>	Child and Family Agency, Unit 3 St Cammillus Hospital, Shelbourne Road, Limerick	(061) 588688
<b>SOUTH TIPPERARY</b>	Child and Family Agency, Yellow House, Wester Road, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary	(052) 6177302
<b>WATERFORD</b>	Child and Family Agency, Ely house, Ferrybank, Co. Wexford	(053) 9185680
<b>WESTMEATH</b>	Social Work Department, Athlone Health Centre, Coosan Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath	(0906) 48 3106
<b>WEXFORD</b>	Child and Family Agency, Ely House, Ferrybank, Co. Wexford	(053) 9185680
<b>WICKLOW</b>	Child and Family Agency, Unit 9, Nutgrove Retail Park, Churchtown, Dublin 14	(01) 9213400
<b>WEST WICKLOW</b>	Child and Family Agency, St Mary's, Craddockstown Road, Naas, Co. Kildare	(045) 882400