



Appendix 5

RISK ASSESSMENT – GENERAL GUIDANCE

Risk assessments should be completed well before the event/activity and should be approved by the event leader or, if completed by the event leader, by a suitably qualified individual. If in doubt, seek advice from your Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator/Officer/Adviser.

A risk assessment for an event/activity need not be complex but it should be comprehensive.

A formal assessment of the risks that might be met during an event/activity should have the aim of identifying the potential hazards and then reducing them. Children and young people must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. Safety must always be the prime consideration. If the risks cannot be managed safely then the event/activity must not take place.

The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations.

- a. What are the hazards?
- b. Who might be affected by them?
- c. What safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- d. Can the event leader put the safety measures in place?
- e. What steps will be taken in an emergency?

The following factors should be taken into consideration when assessing the risks.

- a. The type of event/activity and the level at which it is being undertaken.
- b. The location, routes and modes of transport.
- c. The competence, experience and qualifications of adult helpers.
- d. The ratio and gender of adults to children.
- e. The group members' ages, competence, fitness and temperament and the suitability of the activity. **(Check consent form for this information)**.
- f. The specific or medical needs of children/young people. **(Check consent form for this information)**
- g. Seasonal conditions, weather and timing of event or activity.
- h. How to cope when a child/young person becomes unable or unwilling to continue.
- i. The need to monitor the risks throughout the event/activity.

The person carrying out the risk assessment should record and give copies to all leaders prior to the event/activity, with details of the measures they should take to avoid or reduce the risks. Parish priests or leaders of the organisation should also be given a copy so that approval, as necessary, can be given with a clear understanding that effective planning has taken place.

Frequent visits to local venues such as a leisure centre may not need a risk assessment every time. Nevertheless, it is essential not to become complacent. A generic assessment of the risks of such visits should be made at regular intervals and careful monitoring should take place.

The event leader and other leaders should monitor the risks throughout the event and take appropriate action as necessary.

Before booking a day/residential trip the event leader should obtain a written or documentary assurance that providers such as retreat centres or tour operators have assessed the risks and have appropriate safety measures in place, including:

- Safe recruitment procedures.
- Adequate public liability insurance.
- A license to operate (where required).
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for its staff.
- Safeguarding policy.