

# Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



## CATEGORY A

### PARISH EVENTS

#### A1. PREPARING FOR AN EVENT

One person, the event leader, should have overall responsibility for the planning, supervision and conduct of the event. In particular he/she should:

- a. Ensure that appropriate approval is obtained and as necessary complete the Approval for Events and Activities Form **(See Form CaSE 2)** with the Parish Priest or the Leader of the Organisation. This form should be completed prior to the event.
- b. Ensure an initial risk assessment appropriate to the planned event/activity is carried out prior to the event taking place. First Aid provision should be part of the risk assessment. **(See Form CaSE 3)**.
- c. Ensure that the existing insurance arrangements are adequate for the intended activity.
- d. Ensure that the leaders are appointed in accordance with the recruitment procedures and are properly prepared for this event.
- e. Keep a register of meetings, the children/young people and adults present and a brief record of the activities undertaken. **(See Form CaSE 5)**.
- f. Keep a record with up-to-date relevant information on the children and young people attending the event, e.g. health needs.
- g. Ensure that those with parental responsibility understand any arrangements for collecting children/young people at the end of the event.
- h. Evaluate the event as appropriate to aid learning and development and refer any issues to the appropriate individual or body.

#### A2. CONSENT

For activities where parents and carers are in the vicinity, e.g. Children's Liturgy, no written consent form is required. The parent or carer exercises parental responsibility by virtue of their close proximity to the event.

For activities where parents or carers are not in the vicinity, e.g. youth groups, the person with parental responsibility for each child/young person under 18 will be required to complete and sign forms containing the following:

- a. A general consent form which details the planned event.
- b. Consent to group/activity photographs.
- c. Any relevant medical information.
- d. An emergency contact telephone number.
- e. Acknowledgement of the co-responsibility of those with parental responsibility to ensure reasonable behaviour during the event. **(See Form CaSE 4)**

#### A3. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The event leader must ensure that:

- a. The premises are appropriate for the intended activity and monitor risk throughout the activity and take appropriate action as necessary.
- b. A First Aid kit is available.
- c. The children/young people/vulnerable adults are briefed at the start of the event/activity and wherever possible involve them in setting any general behavioural guidelines or establishing a Code of Conduct for their behaviour.
- d. Fire evacuation procedures need to be explained.
- e. An incident report form is completed within 24 hours of an accident or incident. **(See Form CaSE 6)**.

**An accident is defined as** "An unplanned, unforeseen, unexpected and unintended event, which results in injury to people or damage to property,"

**An incident** is more general and is an event that has an undesirable consequence be it involving physical impact or a "near miss."

# Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



During an event, the leader should:

- Ensure that no unauthorised person can gain access to the event.
- Introduce themselves to the children, young people and vulnerable adults present.
- Ensure that transport arrangements as agreed with parents and detailed on the consent form are adhered to.
- Allow no child/young person/vulnerable adult to leave with someone unknown to the leaders.

## A4. SUPERVISION

It is important to have an appropriate ratio of adult supervisors to children/young people/ vulnerable adults. The factors to consider are:

- Age and gender of group members.
- Individual with special needs.
- First Aid cover.
- Nature of the activity.

There must always be a minimum of two adults linked to every group for all activities and events. A general guide for minimum supervision ratios provided by the DCSF is:

- 1 adult leader for every 3 children under 5.
- 1 adult leader for every 6 children under 8.
- 1 adult leader for every 10-15 children aged 8-11.
- 1 adult leader for every 15-20 children aged over 11.

Consideration must be given to increase supervision ratios as appropriate to the needs of the children, young people and vulnerable adults or the nature of the activity.

Where the group activity involves planned separation into smaller groups, the sub-groups should remain in close proximity to each other to allow for an adult leader to summon the help of another adult. This also enables the leaders in the sub-group to monitor each other so as to safeguard the interests of both children and adults involved.

Young people under 18 are welcome and encouraged to assist with events/activities. Their involvement must be monitored so that they do not have the responsibilities of a group leader or are used to meet the supervision criteria above. The more responsibilities entrusted to them the more prepared they must be for their role.

## A5. LOCATION

Any meeting with children and young people must always be held in a public place and with a minimum of two adults present.

A public place for the purpose of this policy is defined as an area which is:  
Visually accessible (e.g. through a window) and not behind a closed door  
or  
frequented by other people (e.g. staff room/kitchen, sports hall).

It is accepted that unforeseen circumstances (e.g. an accident) may arise whereby it is not possible to maintain the presence of two adults. For this reason care needs to be taken in the planning stage when selecting an adequate number of leaders and the venue for the event/activity.

If this does occur, the situation must be reported to another leader (where applicable the group leader) and be recorded to safeguard the interests of both children and adults concerned.

## A6. CODE OF CONDUCT

A Code of Conduct is given to all volunteers it is not exhaustive and cannot cover every eventuality. It is intended to provide a minimum framework for good practice when providing activities and events specifically for children, young people and vulnerable adults. The code of conduct must be displayed in all Church premises where activities involving children, young people and vulnerable adults take place.

## A7. DISCIPLINE

Discipline should be viewed as a way of helping children achieve self-control and not as a punishment. Group leaders should agree consistent approaches to discipline. **Under no circumstances is physical chastisement acceptable. (See Appendix 1).**

# Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



## A8. PHYSICAL CONTACT

Physical contact between an adult and a child, young person or vulnerable adult should reflect the child, young person or vulnerable adult's needs and not the adult's. Guidance on appropriate physical contact can be found below.

Although generally speaking physical contact between adults and the children or young people with whom they are working will not be appropriate, there are occasions when it may be entirely appropriate and proper. It is crucial, however, that they only do so in ways appropriate to their role.

A 'no touch' approach is both inappropriate and impractical.

There should therefore be a culture of 'limited touch'.

This means that when physical contact is made with children or young people this should be in response to:

- a. Their needs at the time.
- b. Of limited duration.
- c. Appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity, and their cultural and religious background.

Appropriate physical contact will occur most often with younger children and with children or young people who have additional needs.

Those working with children and young people must always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny.

All groups should have a system for recording any physical contact with a child that may be different in some way from the normal or may be considered to be open to criticism, and adults involved will ensure that they record any such physical contact.

### Guidance on Physical Contact between Children and Adults

- a. Any physical contact should take place in public except in a situation where this would be undignified or insensitive, e.g. a young child attending a Children's Liturgy Group who urgently needs the toilet and there may not be enough time to seek the assistance of the parent. It will be necessary in that situation to act immediately and in as dignified a manner as possible.
- b. Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others (except in exceptional circumstances when they need urgent medical attention).
- c. Physical contact should never be secretive, nor for the gratification of the adult. It should always reflect the child's needs and not the adult's.
- d. Even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by an one to whom this action is described. This is especially so where a child has experienced previous abuse or neglect. The child may associate physical contact with these past experiences and may wrongly interpret otherwise appropriate physical contact.
- e. Never touch a child in a way that may be considered indecent.
- f. Avoid any physical contact that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or child.
- g. Never indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights.
- h. If it is necessary for physical contact to occur regularly with an individual child or young person, for instance a very young child or a child with additional needs, this should be agreed with the parent or group leader. Otherwise there is a danger that this regular contact may be misinterpreted.
- i. When physical contact is considered appropriate, seek the child's permission, where feasible, before initiating contact. Listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible – use a level of contact that is appropriate to the situation and acceptable to the child, for the minimum time necessary.
- j. If you are helping, comforting or reassuring a child who is in distress and this requires physical contact, remain self aware at all times and ensure that the contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation. Discreetly inform your co-worker or group leader and do not isolate yourself from your co-worker or group leader. Record any situation that may give rise to concern.
- k. A child may sometimes seek physical contact from an adult inappropriately. The adult must deal with the situation gently and sensitively, reinforcing the importance of personal boundaries, and inform the group or activity leader.



# Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



- l. Some children who have learning difficulties or learning disabilities are very affectionate, even to strangers. The adult must deal with the situation gently and sensitively and inform the event leaders.
- m. In a group, team members, as part of good practice, should monitor one another in relation to physical contact. They should feel able to help each other by pointing out anything that could be misunderstood or uncomfortable for a child/young person.
- n. If an adult engages in inappropriate touch with a child/young person this must be challenged. If there are concerns about an adult's contact with a child or young person, advice must be sought through the Parish Safeguarding Representative or from the Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Officer/Adviser.

## A9. USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS/IMAGES OF CHILDREN

**Full guidance on the use and display of images of children and young people can be found in Appendix 2.**

This guidance builds on existing Policy Guidance on the display of Photographs of Children and Young People in Churches and Church Buildings in England and Wales.

When photographs/images of children and young people are taken/recorded during an activity or event, care is required to ensure that the images appropriately represent the Catholic Church and do not put children at risk.

The most important factor to consider is the improper/illegal use of images of children and young people.

It is necessary to obtain the consent of the person with parental responsibility and that of the child or young person (where he/she is of an age to give 'informed consent').

- a. This will be done prior to making or displaying images of children and young people.
- b. Parents should be advised that images of their children may be made and their consent sought before they can be displayed.

The written consent of the parent/carer is included in the general parental consent form **(Photo 1/Photo 2)**.

## A10. ANTI-BULLYING

With a view to the prevention of bullying, each group/organisation must adopt an anti-bullying policy and ensure that it is adhered to and made available.

A sample anti-bullying policy can be found at **Appendix 3**.

## A11. COMPUTERS

Where children and young people have access to computers as part of Church activities, the event leader has a duty to ensure that:

- a. Measures are in place to ensure that the likelihood of children and young people accessing inappropriate materials is reduced e.g. parental controls and software to filter out internet material.
- b. Children and young people are aware that their personal details e.g. last name, address, school, passwords, e-mail address and telephone numbers are private and should not be disclosed unless approval is given by the event leader.
- c. Children and young people know that they should never send photographs and should be wary of chat rooms.
- d. Children and young people are aware that they should advise a leader about any e-mails or anything on line that makes them feel uncomfortable or bothers them.
- e. Children and young people are aware that they should advise a leader and their parent/carer of a request to meet up with someone they have met on line and not to make plans to do so without alerting an adult and never go alone to such planned meetings.
- f. Children and young people are advised of a code of conduct for using chat rooms.

# Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



A sample code is CHAT

- C = Careful      People on line might not always be who they say they are.  
H = Hang        Hang on to your personal information. Never give out your home address or other information.  
A = Arranging   Arranging to meet can be dangerous. Never arrange to meet someone unless you can be sure who they are.  
T = Tell         Tell your friends or an adult if you find something that makes you feel uncomfortable.

More detailed guidance is available from NCH at:

NCH  
85, Highbury Park  
London  
N5 1UD  
0207 704 7106  
[www.nch.org.uk](http://www.nch.org.uk)

or alternatively can be found at [www.childnet-int.org](http://www.childnet-int.org)

Where use of a computer uncovers unsuitable and/or illegal information, the event leader must contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Officer/Adviser as soon as possible. He will assess whether the matter should be reported to the Internet Watch Foundation at [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk). The Internet Watch Foundation has been set up to combat illegal use of the internet.

## A.12 DRUGS RELATED INCIDENTS

Prior to the event, each group/organisation must devise guidelines to manage situations where it is discovered that children or young people are involved in drugs-related incidents.

Guidance on managing drugs-related incidents can be found at **Appendix 4**.

## A.13 ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY MISSING CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

When there is a concern that a child or young person may be missing, the event leader must arrange an initial search to establish if the child is in the vicinity – this should only be conducted if it is safe to do so and be dependent upon the circumstances.

If an initial search is not the appropriate action or the concern remains the event leader must:

- Ensure the wellbeing of the remaining children; make sure that all are accounted for and properly/adequately supervised.
- Be mindful of the circumstances – the time of year; location; weather conditions; time of day (dusk etc.); age and vulnerability of the child. It is important to take prompt action to avoid panic.
- Contact the Police without delay.
- The responsibility for conducting enquiries and a proper search rests with the Police – they have the experience, knowledge and resources. Their involvement should be considered at the earliest opportunity as the first hour can be vitally important and a rapid response essential.
- When the Police are contacted ensure that the parent/carers contact details are readily available as it is their responsibility to make contact with the parent/carer. Be prepared to assist with information that will help with the enquiries.
- Name, age, description of the child/children.
- When and where last seen and by whom.
- Any known reason for their absence? Is the absence out of character?
- Any known places to be searched, people to be contacted?
- Any known medical conditions or medication required?
- Further assistance should only be offered to the Police after the remaining children's welfare has been secured.

# Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



## ACCIDENTS AND ILLNESS

In order to respond to accident or illness the designated leader responsible for overseeing medical issues must ensure:

- All relevant emergency telephone numbers are clearly displayed around the event venue.
- Prompt assessment of the illness/injury and appropriate action is taken. First Aid should be given, by qualified personnel if available.
- Relevant staff at the event venue should be informed as soon as possible.
- The relevant medical form(s) must be taken with the child/young person to the GP or hospital.
- Parents/carers must be contacted as soon as possible following the incident unless the circumstances require the intervention of the Police, in which case see 'Procedures for Major Incidents'.
- Any Health and Safety issues must be recorded and any remedial action taken as appropriate.

An incident report form can be found at **Form CaSE 6** and a copy of this must be forwarded to the Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Officer/Adviser.

## MAJOR INCIDENTS

Procedures for Major Incidents:

- The designated leader's responsibilities are primarily to supervise and manage the children and young people. If safe to do so move the children and adults from the scene to a place of safety.
- As soon as it is safe to do so, contact the appropriate emergency service i.e. Police, Fire or Ambulance by calling 999. Follow the directions of any emergency service personnel.
- Be prepared to give as much detail as possible of the location; nature of the incident; an estimate of the number of casualties (if known); any potential hazards. Be prepared to remain on the phone – you may be a useful link until the emergency service crews arrive.
- Ensure emergency first aid treatment is given by qualified personnel present.
- Take a roll call of all children/young people and leaders present at the time of the incident. Try to locate them only if it is safe to do so. If not, inform the emergency services, when they arrive, of how many people are missing, their descriptions and likely locations.
- Depending on the nature and scale of the incident the Police may set up a Casualty Bureau to handle information on casualties and to filter/manage calls from concerned relatives and friends. Be ready to provide any necessary details to the Casualty Bureau.
- It is the responsibility of the Police to inform the parents/carers of any victims. Initially, they will not contact parents/carers of those uninjured or safe. If it is safe to do so and there is access to a telephone, contact parents via the system of liaison between the event and the parents established in the planning of the event. It will be important to take the advice of the emergency services regarding arrangements for collection. Parents may not be able to get to the scene.
- If it is safe and practicable to do so the designated leader or another leader should make efforts to monitor the location of children and young people if they are moved from the scene.
- Notify the relevant Church Authorities who will notify the relevant Communication Officer at an appropriate time.

## FIRE SAFETY

Procedures for fire safety:

- All leaders must be familiar with the fire regulations and fire-fighting equipment for the event venue.
- Leaders will ensure that all children/young people know where the appropriate fire exits, alarms and assembly points are and are given instructions on what to do if the alarm sounds.
- All leaders must know the whereabouts of the nearest telephone.
- Children/young people must not use fire-fighting equipment.
- In the event of a fire alarm being raised, evacuate the building(s), move to the appropriate assembly points and take a roll call of those present.
- Contact the Fire Brigade or activate any automatic fire alarms if available. Be prepared to give details of the location; the nature of the incident; number of buildings/people involved and potential hazards.
- Consider undertaking regular fire drills to ensure that leaders and children become familiar with the procedures, the location of the assembly points and any action to be taken.