

Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Diocesan Guidelines for Creating Safe Environments in our Parishes

Many of these will be followed in our parishes anyway but this checklist should help to define the tasks which will lead to sound safeguarding in our communities. In these ways we can firm up our practice and ensure that it becomes uniform across the Diocese.

- ✓ All new and existing volunteers in roles which have been defined nationally as requiring a CRB check must complete the three stage process – Personal Details, Confidential Declaration and CRB Disclosure Application Form.
- ✓ Have a trial period of 3 months for all new volunteers, at the end of which both parties review the situation. Inexperienced parish workers and/ or inexperienced volunteers will benefit from clear guidance and support.
- ✓ All volunteers should have seen and have ready access to the diocesan guidelines and know what to do in the case of suspected or alleged abuse: Listen – Record – Refer. Always take any allegations or concerns of abuse seriously and refer immediately.
- ✓ Make everyone aware that of the Church's safeguarding policies and procedures – young people, parents/ carers, volunteers and visitors. Each Church and hall should display information on the notice board giving contact information to anyone who has a concern.
- ✓ Ensure that any premises used for parish groups and events are safe and well maintained.
- ✓ Know where the emergency exits, fire extinguishers and alarms are and be fully aware of the evacuation plan in the event of any emergency.
- ✓ Encourage all parish workers and volunteers to be involved in regular training (including First Aid). Ensure that there is a first aid kit and that it is checked frequently.
- ✓ Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover, especially for activities away from the normal meeting place. This applies also to any mini buses and/ or private cars which are used – insurance and any necessary permits must be obtained.
- ✓ Keep an up to date register of group contact information; names of children, address, telephone number, special medications, doctor's name and address, telephone number and permission to be 'in loco parentis'. Ensure that there is always access to a phone/ mobile in case of emergency.
- ✓ Ensure that a **minimum** of two leaders is always present, maintaining the gender balance of the group. In larger groups/ clubs the following supervision ratios should be adhered to:

1 adult to every 3 children under 5
1 adult to every 6 children aged 5 – 8

1 adult to every 10-15 children aged 8 – 11
1 adult to every 15-20 children aged over 11

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- ✓ During any activities away from the normal meeting place, a risk assessment should be undertaken and the supervision ratios should be increased accordingly.
- ✓ For any activities away from the normal meeting place ensure that parents/ guardians have signed a consent form. Ensure that someone knows where the group is working away from the normal meeting place.
- ✓ Always think and act carefully to avoid situations which could lead to difficulties or embarrassment, accusations or temptations. An example of 'danger' is one leader/ worker and one young person being together 'in private' – whether that be in counselling, or on a residential weekend, or driving someone home in a car. Remember that someone else may misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned. Do not just rely on your good name to protect you.
- ✓ Do not permit any photographs or videos to be taken or displayed of parish events without parental consent. Never show a photograph of a child or young person with personal details (including their name) accompanying it.
- ✓ Treat everyone with dignity and respect at all times, set an example you would wish others to follow and always behave appropriately, in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

AIM OF THE POLICY

To minimise situations where the abuse of vulnerable people may occur by proper planning of activities and events.

Category A

Parish Events/Activities

This category includes one-off events and regular meetings specifically for children, young people or vulnerable adults **in the parish** and which are usually **indoors**.

Examples include:

- Catechetics, including First Holy Communion and Confirmation Classes.
- Children's Liturgy.
- Youth Groups.
- Prayer meetings.
- Charity Fund-raising events.

Category B

Miscellaneous

This category refers to unplanned/informal contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

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Category C

Day Trips and Outings

This category refers to groups belonging to a parish or a church organisation undertaking a **day trip or outing**. These events are non-residential.

Category D

Residential Events

This category includes Parish Groups and Church organisations that take part in residential events.

It is expected that the Diocese has its own Health and Safety policy that has been approved by its insurance company and the requirements of this policy are met in full.

The Health and Safety procedures contained in this policy are to be viewed as an extension of the existing Health and Safety Policy of the Diocese. The Diocese agrees to adopt these policies and procedures and inform their Insurance Company.

