

Portlaoise Life Church

Child Protection Guidelines V4.0

For use in the Republic of Ireland



UPDATED – AUGUST 2024

Revision History

Version	Year	Person	Details
4.1	August 2024	Noel Cammack	Updated our Code of Behaviour Policy on Discipline (pg. 19) to include Procedure to deal with misbehaviour in the classroom.
4.0	May 2024	Noel Cammack	- updated leadership team list - updated leadership team responsibilities - updated ministry name to "Portlaoise Life Church" - removed statements referring to "CCI" from the document
3.1	Jan 2020	Noel Cammack	New DLP "Heather Cammack"
3.0	June 2019	Noel Cammack	Garda Vetting Agreement with Carlow Volunteer Centre. Screening form language changes. References form simplified.
2.2	June 2017	Noel Cammack	"AGI" changed to "CCI". Leadership team names updated. Removed old Garda vetting application. Replaced with info that we now use online system through CCI and NYCI. Reference form updated
2.1	Oct 2015	Noel Cammack	Inserted new Garda Vetting Application from CCI Office (Patricia).
2.0	Oct 2015	Noel Cammack	Updated logos. Addition of questions 5 & 6 in Screening form. Updated address. Team updated.
	Oct 2014	Noel Cammack	Team Updated. Garda Vetting through National Youth Council (not Life Church).
	Jun 2013	Noel Cammack	Team Updates
	Jan 2012	Noel Cammack	Original Version

Children's Ministry Leadership Team.

LEAD PASTOR:

Noel Cammack

DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON:

Heather Cammack

ASSISTANT DLP:

Portia Ncube

KIDS MINISTRY OVERSEERS:

Heather Cammack & Fiona Glusiec

YOUTH OVERSEER:

Portia Ncube

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Leadership Team Responsibilities

1. Should ensure that a child protection policy is drafted for and implemented in their ministry.
2. Should ensure that all members of that team are trained to implement their child protection policy.
3. Should implement and maintain good practice in the recruitment, assessment, training, management and support of workers.
4. Should require each worker in respect of any position involving potential contact with children to understand, accept and sign up to the ministry's policy.
5. Should plan and supervise the work of the ministries to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur.
6. Must follow the procedures set out in their policy regarding how to respond to the disclosure, concern or allegation of any form of child abuse.
7. Should ensure that suitable notices are displayed on ministry premises giving relevant information to children and adults regarding the statutory authorities to which they can report their concerns.
8. Should exercise reasonable care when letting a ministry premises for activities that will involve work with children. All external bodies or tenants should sign an annual agreement accepting the terms of the Child Protection and Independent Organisations section.
9. Should ensure that the appropriate insurances are put in place by the ministry's insurer.

The Designated Person

The Designated Person shall:

1. Refer suspicions/allegations/concerns of child abuse to the statutory authorities
2. Co-ordinate locally on particular cases that arise
3. Ensure appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing under confidential cover
4. Be a resource on child protection matters to the leaders and workers
5. Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the ministry, the liaison with other agencies and/or involvement of any ministry worker and record the outcome
6. Store all related files in a safe and secure place
7. Maintain a working knowledge of child protection issues
8. Liaise with and support parents/guardians, children and ministry workers ensuring safety for the children accessing the ministry
9. Establish contact with the senior member of community services responsible for child protection in relevant catchment area on behalf of the ministry, i.e. Duty Social Work Team
10. Ensure that the ministry's child protection policy is followed at all times

Suitability for Designated Person role

The people best suited to the role of Designated Person are those whose occupations, or lengthy voluntary experience, have brought them into contact with children. Those who have already participated in foundation training in child protection, e.g. nurses, teachers, social workers, probation officers and doctors may be particularly suitable. Consideration should also be given to those who could bring particular gifts and skills to the role, e.g. those with administrative experience.

Ministries need to indicate the duration of appointment as a Designated Person, perhaps a period of three or five years which might be renewable, so that the role and responsibility is shared among members.

Proposed Designated Persons must be vetted, prior to appointment.

It is highly advised that a Designated Person ideally should not be the Senior Leader of the same ministry or ideally should not be the spouse or immediate relative of the Senior Leader.

The Deputy Designated Person

The Deputy Designated Person shall assist the designated person in fulfilling his or her role and responsibilities, particularly in the area of administration.

Contacts and Resources:

- **HSE Child Protection and Welfare Service**
Laois , Child and Family Centre, Portlaoise. Tel. 057 869 2567
- **HSE infoline** Provides information on all HSE services, including services for children and families.
Lo-call: 1850 24 1850 www.hse.ie
- **Parentline** A national confidential helpline for parents, guardians and carers in need of support. Lo-call: 1890 927 277 www.parentline.ie

- **Childline** Gives support to young people through a freephone 24 hour listening service and through its website. Children can call Childline for a chat or to talk about problems, and all calls are free of charge and confidential. Freephone: 1800 666 666 www.childline.ie
- **ISPCC** The Irish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children provides the Childline service, which children can call with any worries and concerns. ISPCC also provides a range of services to support parents. Tel: 01 676 7960 www.ispcc.ie
- **Barnardos** Provides services to respond to the needs of children and families, and also works to develop guidelines and service provision. Callsave: 1850 222 300 www.barnardos.ie
- **HSE National Counselling Service** A professional, confidential counselling and psychotherapy service available free of charge for adults who experienced abuse as children. For more information or to make an appointment contact: Tel: 1800 235 234 www.hse-ncs.ie

- **Evening Telephone Counselling Service and Helpline**

Wed and Thurs 6pm-10pm and Fri, Sat, Sun, 8pm-12 midnight. Freephone: 1800 235 235

- **Citizens Information Service** For information about all public services in Ireland.

Lo-call: 1890 777 121 www.citizensinformation.ie

- **Support and Services for One-Parent Families**

Treoir, Lo-call: 1890 252 084 www.treoir.ie

- **One Family**. Lo-call: 1890 66 22 12 www.oneparent.ie

- **Samaritans** Available 24 hours a day to provide confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which may lead to suicide.

Call save: 1850 60 90 90 www.samaritans.org

These guidelines draw on the following materials:

- CCI Child Protection Guidelines www.ccireland.ie
- "Children First" National Guidelines issued by the Department of Health and Children
- "Our Duty to Care" issued by the Department of Health and Children and NI edition issued by the Volunteer Development Agency
- "Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector" published by the Department of Education and Science
- Safeguarding Trust: The Church of Ireland Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children, 2008
- Irish Wheelchair Association Child Protection Guidelines and Procedure 2009

Checklist for Leadership Team

A basic responsibility is to make sure that children and young people are safe.

	Yes	No
a) The checklist below may be of help to you:		
Is first-aid available during all activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there an up-to-date first-aid kit available both on the premises and for activities away from the premises?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do workers know who the first-aider is and where he/she can be contacted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all accidents recorded?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How? _____		
Do workers know where the nearest available phone is?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Do regular fire drills take place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are fire notices displayed informing people what to do in case of fire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are fire appliances suitable and serviced regularly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has the local fire officer visited the premises?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Is there suitable access and provision made for disabled people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Is a register kept of all those in attendance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a parental consent form and health form been completed for each child/young person (particularly for day trips and residential activities)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Have those working with children/young people been subjects of a robust recruitment and selection procedure including a Garda vetting check?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have workers been properly introduced to the work, adequately supported and offered training?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do workers in the ministry know what to do if a child/young person tells them of abuse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are worker/child ratios appropriate for the group and for the activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Are there male and female workers for mixed groups? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are the places where children/young people meet safe and secure from unwelcome people? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is it possible for children/young people to get outside without workers noticing? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Are children/young people safe? Is the notice in 9.2.1 on display? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Is the Health and Safety statement available and is it up to date? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h) Is this checklist reviewed annually? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Checklist for Record Keeping

- | | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Is there a register of all workers with children and youth in the ministry? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Have all workers signed relevant declaration/application form regarding any previous convictions? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Have all workers received the relevant sections of <i>the ministry's Child Protection Policy</i> ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Have all workers signed the Declaration of Acceptance of <i>Ministry's Child Protection Policy</i> ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Are all personnel records systematically filed?
Records must include:
(i) worker declaration/application;
(ii) references;
(iii) acknowledgement of receipt /acceptance of <i>Ministry's Child Protection Policy</i> ;
(iv) any notes made by the Leadership Team at their interviews;
(v) note verifying that a Garda vetting check was completed and the person was suitable for appointment. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| *Note: The date of commencement and completion of responsibility must be shown. | | |
| f) Are these records kept in a secure filing system to which only the Leadership Team has access? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Are files of individuals who have completed service retained indefinitely? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

*Note: Attendance registers, consent forms for activities and completed accident books must also be kept.

Checklist for Safe Premises

The following are not in any particular order. Tick those where you are satisfied and rank the remainder in a sequence of items to be implemented or checked.

(In the case of those organising residential camps assume the questions apply to the venue you are using.)

	Yes	No
a) Has the hall or premises where your group meets got a health and safety statement? This is a legal requirement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Is there a fire certificate for the premises?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Have you seen it and has it been reviewed on an annual basis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Are you satisfied that there are insurance arrangements in place for taking groups away?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you to notify the insurer when this happens?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Have you a strategy in place if a child falls ill, is injured or there is an emergency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Have you the completed parental consent forms with details of how to contact parents or guardians?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Have you details of health problems, emergency contact numbers and addresses for members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Does your venue have fire extinguishers and are they serviced on a regular basis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Have you had a fire drill recently?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Are you satisfied with the availability and content of the first-aid box?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) Is there an accident and incident book on the premises to record, date and sign details of any accident, incident or damage?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l) Do precautions e.g. intercom, exist regarding access to the premises by strangers while a youth/children's group is meeting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m) Have parents/legal guardians a formal note about opening and closing times?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n) Is the ratio between workers and children and the gender balance appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o) Have you distributed the relevant parts of Ministry's Child Protection Policy to each of your workers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p) Have you planned, in conjunction with your Ministry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Leader, training sessions for your workers?

q) Do you have a budget for equipment and training for your role and that of your workers?

r) Have you acquired from the HSE Child Protection Information and Advice Person, copies of the summary of "Children First" and the "Our Duty To Care" pack and circulated them to your workers?

What immediate steps do you intend to take and what precautions will you request the Leadership Team to put in place within the next month?

1.

2.

3.

Checklist of safe practices

Use this as a regular checklist to keep your organisation and its members and workers safe.

Know the children

- Have defined criteria for membership of the organisation
- Have a registration system for each child
- Keep a record on each child, including medical details, any special needs and emergency contact telephone numbers

Keep records of:

- Attendance
- Accidents - keep an incident book (accident records should be reviewed regularly and any unusual patterns reported to the Leadership Team)
- Consents given for various activities
- Any complaints or grievances

Know the workers

- Follow thorough recruitment and selection procedures
- Have a work schedule displayed so that everyone knows who is on duty
- Respond appropriately to any allegations or complaints made about workers
- Make sure there are always sufficient workers of either gender to supervise activities

Pay attention to health and safety matters making sure that:

- Any buildings being used are safe and meet required standards
- There is sufficient heating and ventilation
- Toilets, shower areas and washing facilities are up to standard
- Fire precautions are in place
- First-aid facilities and equipment are adequate
- There is access to a phone
- Equipment is checked regularly
- Insurance cover is adequate

It is important to ensure that:

- Children are not left unattended
- Workers know at all times where children are and what they are doing
- Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment has constant adult supervision
- Dangerous behaviour is not allowed

If the activities involve staying away from home overnight, attention should also be paid to the following:

- Safe methods of transport
- Adequate insurance, to cover all aspects of the trip
- Written parental consent
- Any information about the children which may be relevant to staying away overnight, like allergies, medical problems or special needs
- Appropriate and well supervised sleeping arrangements
- Respect for the privacy of children and young people in dormitories, changing rooms, showers and toilets e.g. the use of cameras, mobile phones is prohibited from sleeping/changing areas

Ensure discipline and be prepared to cope with challenging behaviour

- Workers need to be trained and prepared for coping with disruptive behaviour.
- It is recommended that:
 - More than one worker is present when challenging behaviour is being dealt with
 - A record is kept in the accident/incident report form, see **9.2.9**, describing what happened, the circumstances, who was involved, any injury to a person or to property and how the situation was resolved

Provide training, including:

- Induction training
- Particular skills training, to fit in with the nature of the ministry
- Child protection training, to raise awareness and provide information about how to respond to suspicions or incidents of child abuse

Supervise workers

- Focus on the work to be done always acknowledging the positive tasks that have already been carried out
- Provide opportunities for discussing concerns and training needs
- Hold a review at the end of the trial period to confirm whether the workers should remain in his/her post or have his/her services terminated
- Have an annual review or 'staff appraisal' to assess general performance and review any changes that have happened or that you need to make

Checklist of first-aid box contents

Use this as a checklist. Quantities should reflect the numbers using any premises.

Check the expiry date of items.

The contents of a first-aid kit should be clearly marked and readily accessible. The kit must be kept in a dry atmosphere and checked and replenished regularly, so that the items you need are always ready to use. It would be wise to have a chart inside the lid of the box which states when the kit was last inspected and by whom.

Adhesive dressings or plasters: Use for minor wounds. The waterproof types are the best choice for wounds on the hands. A box of assorted with heel and finger plasters included should suffice.

Sterile eye pads: Two of these are required.

Sterile dressings: Available in a range of sizes. Two small, two medium and two large recommended.

Roller bandages: Used to give support to joints, secure dressings, maintain pressure on a dressing or limit swelling. At least two should be available, one medium and one large.

Triangular bandages: Used as slings. Also used to keep limbs immobile where breakages have occurred or where it is necessary to move a casualty, e.g. two around ankles, two around knees and two at top of thighs.

Finger bandages: Usually available as kit with applicator and bandage together.

A basic kit should also contain:

- Disposable gloves, these should be put on prior to treatment of any kind
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Cotton wool
- Cleansing wipes
- Adhesive tape
- Plastic face shield (recommended where artificial respiration is required to be administered)
- Ice Packs
- Notebook and pen (probably the most important thing in the box for insurance reasons)
- Safety pins
- Specify Nitrile gloves (people can be allergic to latex)
- Specify non alcoholic wipes (same reason)
- Foil blanket
- Cotton wool and disinfectant (for a larger building)
- Burn ointments or sprays are not recommended where hospital treatment may be necessary.
- Where possible check a child's medical record, as supplied by parent, before administering first-aid.

Advise parents if a child receives first aid even for minor cuts and scrapes.

Tablets or medicines must not be issued from a first-aid box.

Declaration of acceptance of Life Church Child Protection Policy

Ministry Name: Portlaoise Life Church Kids and Youth Ministry

Declaration

I hereby declare that I have read (Ministry's Child Protection Policy), I understand the details of the policy and the duty to care that I must adhere to while working with or in contact with children.

Name (*print*)

Signed

Date

NB *This declaration is to be retained by the Ministry Leader.*

Child Protection Policy

Life Church recognises that, under the Child Care Act (1991), 'a child is deemed to be anyone under the age of 18 years other than a person who is ...married.'

Life Church also aims to be open and transparent with parents and will seek *Parental Consent* for all activities involving children. This includes consent for Junior Leaders under 18 years of age.

Child Protection Policy Statement:

"We in Life Church want to provide a safe, secure, loving environment for children to participate in and where parents feel comfortable leaving their child. Therefore we have a policy that reflects our desire to prevent child abuse and to stop child abuse, as we become aware of it."

We aim to do this by:

Record Keeping:

Having a registration system for each child and young person who attend with details of medical needs, emergency phone numbers, names of parents/guardians and signed parental consent for attendance and activities.

Parent Partnership:

Giving parents information about what we do.

Screening Leaders:

Requesting completed reference form and name of a references from each applicant. References are sought and a reference may be followed up by a telephone call to discuss the applicant's suitability to work with children.

Training our Volunteers:

To maintain a 'children first' approach in everything they do and asking them to sign an agreement concerning their behaviour towards the children and young people.

Written Code of Behaviour for leaders/volunteers:

Life Church has a Code of Behaviour for leaders / volunteers giving guidelines on what is expected, and what is not expected, with regard to their behaviour with children and young people. This code of behaviour includes a policy on discipline to be followed by leaders.

Maintaining Incident and Accident forms:

Any complaints, accidents, incidents or concerns will be dealt with and recorded on the Incident and Accident Forms.

Dealing with Allegations of Abuse:

The only exception to this is if a child discloses an allegation of abuse. This should be referred to the Designated Officer and the Form for Reporting Allegations should be filled in by the leader who received the information. The Designated Officer will then complete the National Health Board Reporting Form and liaise with the appropriate Health Board.

It is the policy of Life Church to report to the appropriate Health Board any allegation of abuse by a child or parent using the National standardised Reporting Form. The Designated Officer is responsible for collating

the information and liaising with the Health Board. The Designated Officer is also responsible for raising the awareness of child abuse and appropriate responses to children who disclose.

Life Church will follow the guidelines laid down in 'Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children' issued by the Department of Health in 1999.

General Working Principles at Life Church Children and Youth Events:

- Children are not normally left unattended.
- Leaders / volunteers know at all times where the children are and what they are doing.
- Dangerous behaviour with children or between children is not allowed.
- Smoking is not allowed.
- First Aid Boxes are available and maintained.
- If a child needs medical attention parents will be notified and appropriate medical attention will be sought.
- Leaders/volunteers are trained what to do in the event of the fire alarm going off.

Life Church children and youth ministries have based their Child Protection Policy on the advice given in 'Our Duty to Care: The Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People' issued by the Department of Health and Children (2000)

Life Church believes "children should be treated with respect and believes all children have the right to be treated equally regardless of colour, race, religion or disability" (U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child: ratified by Ireland in 1992)

Life Church also believes that a child has the right to enjoy his or her culture and to profess and practice his or her own religion (U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 30)

Life Church subscribes to the 'Commitment to Care' document produced by the Lucan Conference (1997), which aims 'to promote a higher standard of Christian Childcare and Child Protection in the Republic of Ireland'.

Code of Behaviour

1. Leader / Volunteer Approval

- All leaders/volunteers must have a completed and approved application on file in the church office.

2. Restroom Procedures:

- Leaders/volunteers may never take a child, alone, to the restroom. It is our policy to get the parents if the child needs to use the restroom, but if this is not possible then the child is to be accompanied by no less than two adults.
- Children should have as much privacy as possible. Enter a bathroom stall only when absolutely necessary to assist the child while keeping the door open.
- Leaders/volunteers are not to change diapers. This is to be done by parents only.

3. Policy on Discipline

- Procedure to deal with misbehaviour in the classroom:
 - i. 1st Adult Attempt to calm the child.
 - ii. 2nd Invite 2nd Adult to Attempt to calm the child.
 - iii. 3rd Get the parent. Parent may stay in class with child or take child out.
 - iv. Always communicate with the Lead Teacher what is happening and then to the DLP.
- Physical discipline, of any kind, is never allowed by church leaders/volunteers in the church setting.

4. Classroom Procedures

- Physical contact with children should be minimal and only in the presence of other adults. Appropriate touching should be limited to handshakes, “high fives”, brief hugs or a brief touch on the shoulder.
- At least two leaders/volunteers should be present whenever possible. No child should be alone with a leader/volunteer.
- Leaders/Volunteers may not have the children sit on their laps.

5. Approved Activities

- Activities or outings outside of regularly scheduled Life Church events must be pre-approved by the Life Church Leadership.
- Leader/Volunteers are never allowed to take a child to the child’s home without another adult accompanying them.

6. Definition of Child Abuse

As defined by “Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Sept. 1999)

- Physical Abuse

...any form of non-accidental injury that causes significant harm to a child, including: (i) shaking; (ii) use of excessive force in handling; (iii) deliberate poisoning; (iv) suffocation (v) Munchausen's syndrome by proxy (where parents fabricate stories of illness about their child or cause physical signs of illness); (vi) allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.

- Neglect

Neglect is normally defined in terms of an omission, where a child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care.

- Sexual Abuse

...occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.

- Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a caregiver and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's needs for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. It is rarely manifested in terms of physical symptoms. Examples of emotional abuse include: (i) persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility, or blaming; (ii) conditional parenting, in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his or her behaviours or actions; (iii) emotional unavailability by the child's parent/carer; etc...

7. Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

- A leader/volunteer who suspects child abuse has occurred should report the incident or suspicions to the Designated Officer.
- The Designated Officer will then complete the National Health Board Reporting Form and liaise with the appropriate Health Board.
 - It is the policy of Life Church to report to the appropriate Health Board any allegation of abuse by a child or parent using the National standardised Reporting Form. The Designated Officer is responsible for collating the information and liaising with the Health Board. The Designated Officer is also responsible for raising the awareness of child abuse and appropriate responses to children who disclose.
 - Life Church will follow the guidelines laid down in 'Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children' issued by the Department of Health in 1999.
- The Contact information for the designated officer is:
 - *Speak with current Children Ministry Leader to find out who the Designated Officer is or see front pages of "Life Church Child Protection Guidelines"*

Safe Practices List

Life Church Children and Youth Ministries agrees to:

- Keep a record of each child with parental release and including medical, dietary or special needs as well as emergency contact telephone numbers.
- Keep records of attendance.
- Have insurance cover for all activities.
- Have an Incident Book for the recording of accidents or incidents.
- Ensure First Aid equipment is easily accessible.
- Promote a non-smoking environment.
- Provide easily accessible toilet facilities.
- Provide supervision of children in all their activities.
- Ensure leaders are aware of safe care practices and organisation policies.
- Exercise reasonable care when letting a ministry premises for activities that will involve work with children. All external bodies or tenants should sign an annual agreement accepting the terms of the Child Protection and Independent Organisations section.

(See 'Commitment to Care' and 'Our Duty to Care' Factsheet 5)

General Working Principles at Life Church Children and Youth Events:

- Children are not normally left unattended.
- Leaders / volunteers know at all times where the children are and what they are doing.
- Dangerous behaviour with children or between children is not allowed.
- Smoking is not allowed.
- First Aid Boxes are available and maintained.
- If a child needs medical attention parents will be notified and appropriate medical attention will be sought.
- Leaders/volunteers are trained what to do in the event of the fire alarm going off.

Ensuring Children's Safety - What can I do?

Children First: Know where the children/young people are at all times. The protection of children and young people is a priority.

Respect: All children to be treated equally regardless of colour, race, religion or disability. The dignity of children is important.

Restroom Procedures:

* Leaders/volunteers may never take a child, alone, to the restroom. It is our policy to get the parents if the child needs to use the restroom, but if this is not possible then the child is to be accompanied by no less than two adults.

* Children should have as much privacy as possible. Enter a bathroom stall only when absolutely necessary to assist the child while keeping the door open.

* Leaders/volunteers are not to change diapers. This is to be done by parents only.

Policy on Discipline

Physical discipline, of any kind, is never allowed by church leaders/volunteers in the church setting.

Child Protection: Be aware of the definitions of abuse and don't add to a child's problems.

Physical: No physical horseplay / smacking / slapping / inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or with other leaders.

Emotional: No name calling / nicknames / slagging / inappropriate joking. Leaders need to be impartial / no favouritism.

Neglect: Leaders need to put aside their own needs when working with children. In residential setting and camps good physical care is vitally important: provision of food, dealing sensitively with bed wetting, medical issues, etc.

Sexual: Be wise when working with young people. Don't spend time with children alone. Here are some suggestions: Keep a door open; Call another leader over; Watch the gender issues; don't allow piggy backs or sitting on knees; be as wise as a serpent and gentle as a dove!

Privacy for Young People: Do not do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves. Swimsuits in the shower, Locks on bathroom doors, etc.

Spiritual Safety: the child has the right under the U.N. Convention of 'freedom of thought, conscience and religion'. The child's religious background and identity are to be respected.

Teamwork: Communication is vitally important.

Strive to keep the unity: If we can't work as part of a team how can we expect the children to do so?

Partnership with parents: Keeping parents informed – openness and transparency are important when working with children. No secrets.

Reporting Allegations Form

Reporting Allegations of Abuse and Child Protection Concerns

If a child discloses information to a leader or volunteer that causes concern that the child is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing abuse, the disclosure by the child or details of any incident witnessed by the worker must be recorded on this form and given to the Designated Officer. Please confine your report to recording what the child actually said or what you saw. Please record times and dates and child's full name and date of birth.

Date of Report: _____

Name of Child: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

Any other agencies involved? (Check if the child has received help already) _____

Any family details known: _____

Details of Concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s):

Please record when the child spoke to you and who was present

Record exactly what the child said including dates of alleged incidents

Record any observed injuries

If you witnessed an incident record factually what you saw

Record any details of person allegedly causing concern and relationship to the child (in any)

Details of the Person completing this form:

Name: _____

Role: _____

Name of Designated Officer: _____

Tel. Number: _____

Incident and Accident Form

This form is to be completed by any leader who witnesses or is first on the scene of an accident or incident in a Life Church event that involves a person under the age of 18.

The Designated officer must countersign the form.

Which Event?	Sunday School: <input type="checkbox"/> (please tick) Youth: <input type="checkbox"/> (please tick) Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> (please tick)
Date of Incident:	
Time of Incident:	
Name and Age of Child/Teenager:	
Describe the incident/accident: Include, Where it occurred? Who was present? What happened?	
Were any injuries sustained? Please describe and write down any bruising observed, etc.	
Action Taken: Please write down exactly what you did:	
Reported to the Designated Officer? Name of D. Officer:	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> _____
Signed: (Leader)	
Signed: (D. Officer)	
Date:	

Parental Consent Form

Life Church Children and Youth Ministries



Please complete this form and return it to:

Life Church
A11, National Enterprise Park
Portlaoise, Co. Laois

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: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

I am willing for (*child's name*) _____ to participate in Life Church children or youth events and confirm that he/she is willing to participate as full 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 son/daughter to attend Life Church children or youth events. In the event of him/her being taken ill or injured during the period of the Children or Youth events 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 his/her health or safety.

Parent/guardian signature: _____ Date: _____

Consent must be provided by the person with parental responsibility

Medical Information Form – for parents

Please complete and return. Thank you.	
Name of Child	
Date of Birth	
What does your child suffer from?	
Name of medication?	
Does your child take: Tablets <input type="checkbox"/> Medicine <input type="checkbox"/> Inhaler <input type="checkbox"/>	
Dosage: How many times a day?	
Times of administration: <i>Morning</i> <i>Lunchtime</i> <i>Teatime</i> <i>Bedtime</i>	
If your child is bringing an inhaler is he/she able to use this him/herself? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

*** Please leave all medication in their original packets ***

Parental Consent:

I give permission for the medication listed above to be given to my child at Life Church Children and Youth Events.

Signed: (Parent/Guardian) _____

Swimming: Do you allow your child to go swimming? Yes No

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this form.

If you have any queries, or require an more information, please do not hesitate to contact one of us at Life Church. For contact details see www.LifeChurch.ie or email us at info@lifechurch.ie

Dietary Information Form – for parents

Please complete in relation to your child.	
Name of Child	
Date of Birth	
DIETARY INFORMATION:	
Please outline any food requirements:	
Is your child allergic to anything?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Please Outline any allergies:	
Signed: (Parent/Guardian)	
Date:	
Thank you for taking the time to fill out this form.	
If you have any queries, or require an more information, please do not hesitate to contact one of us at Life Church. For contact details see www.LifeChurch.ie or email us at info@lifechurch.ie	

Screening Form



Life Church – Children and Youth Ministries

This screening form is to be completed for any position involving the supervision or care of children or youth. This form is being used to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____
 FIRST NAME SURNAME

PRESENT ADDRESS: _____

DAY PHONE: _____ EVENING PHONE: _____

OCCUPATION: _____ MARITAL STATUS: _____ BIRTHDATE: _____

Please write a short paragraph telling how you became a Christian: _____

1. How long have you attended Life Church? _____

2. List the names and addresses of other churches you have attended regularly during the past (5) years:

3. List all previous church work involving children and/or youth:
Church's Name and Complete Address Type of Work Performed

4. List all previous non-church work involving children and/or youth:
Name Address Telephone Number

The responses to the following questions will be kept confidential in the Children and Youth Ministries Office.

5. Are you married or single? married single other (explain) _____

6. Do you practice a sexually pure lifestyle as taught in the Scriptures? No Yes

7. Have you ever been arrested for, charged with, under probation for, or convicted of either sexual or physical abuse? No Yes – If yes, please explain. (Attach a separate page if necessary.)

8. Have you ever used illegal drugs? No Yes – If yes, please explain. _____

9. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence? No Yes – If yes, please explain.

10. Is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance and care of young people? No Yes – If yes, please explain.

11. Have you read and agree to abide by the policies presented in the Code of Behaviour Form?
 Yes No

12. Please provide us with the names of two people over the age of 18, not related, who can provide you with references. These can be personal acquaintances, former/current colleagues, employers or anyone else who would be able to comment on your suitability for this volunteer role

Reference 1

Name: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Address: _____ Relationship: _____

Reference 2

Name: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Address: _____ Relationship: _____

Thank you for completing this screening form. Please sign and return to the ministry leader. By signing you agree that the information contained in this screening form is correct to the best of your knowledge.

Applicant's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Reference Questions

Possible reference questions to be used when contacting references given by applicant.

APPLICANTS NAME: _____

Reference Name: _____ Date Contacted: _____

1. How long have you known the Applicant? _____

2. In what capacity have you known him/her? _____

3. In your opinion how does the applicant demonstrate the following qualities?

1 = excellent 2 = very good 3 = good 4 = fair 5 = poor 6 = don't know

Ability to work with children	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ability to work in a Team	1	2	3	4	5	6
Leadership ability / responsibility	1	2	3	4	5	6
Attitude to authority / supervision	1	2	3	4	5	6
Reliability	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. What do you think are this person's strengths? _____

5. Do you know of any area of personal or spiritual difficulty which could affect this person's work with children? Please Specify: _____

6. Any other comments? _____

Ministry Leader Notes

GARDA VETTING

*Garda Vetting is conducted in partnership with
Carlow Volunteer Centre using the new online system.*

For Adult Volunteers:

Form NVB1 must be completed and submitted to Life Church Ireland's Garda Vetting Officer with **proof of address** and **proof of Identity**.

For Volunteers Ages 16-17:

Form NVB1 and **Form NVB3** (parental consent) must be completed and submitted to Life Church Ireland's Garda Vetting Officer with **proof of address** and **proof of identity**.

This is then submitted to the new online email vetting system and you will receive confirmations and instructions through your submitted email address.

Annual appraisal of paid and volunteer worker and declaration of background information

Confidential

Name of ministry: **PORTLAOISE LIFE CHURCH**

(To be completed by each worker annually, discussed with their supervising leader and forwarded to the Ministry Leader)

We thank you for all you do for this ministry and hope that this exercise may be helpful as you reflect on your work.

The ministry wishes to support you in your work with children. Are there any areas of your work in which we might provide training to assist your skills development?

Have you suggestions for additional resources or other ideas to develop your work?

Has there been any change in your personal circumstances that may affect your capacity to continue in this role?

Yes No

(If yes please give details)

Have you any questions you wish to ask or further comments you wish to make?

Confidential

Annual declaration

(To be completed by each worker and filed by the ministry leader)

Have you any prosecutions pending?

Yes No

(If yes please give details)

In the past year have you been convicted at a court or cautioned by the police for any offence?

Yes No

If yes please list below details of all convictions, cautions or bound-over orders.

I further declare that nothing has changed in my background which would alter the circumstances in which I work with children.

Signature

Date

Name

Post / Role

Supervising leader

FOR MINISTRY LEADER USE ONLY

Date received

Child Protection and Independent Organisations

An independent organisation is a group that, while not operated by the ministry, nonetheless uses ministry premises. Such organisations may be specifically youth organisations, or organisations which occasionally work with children, e.g. St John Ambulance. The organisation may have an outside headquarters and a separate method for the appointment of leaders e.g. Scouts, Guides, dance lessons etc. Although some of the leaders may attend the local host ministry they are not appointed by the ministry and are not directly responsible to the ministry.

1. General guiding principles

1.1 In all our practice the host premises and independent organisations agree that the welfare and safety of children is the paramount consideration.

1.2 It is recognised that ministries and organisations are interdependent and it is therefore vital that constructive working relationships are developed and maintained.

1.3 If an organisation using ministry premises is operated independently of the ministry, while the ministry will not be responsible for the appointment of leaders or general running of the organisation, it is recognised that the ministry still has some interest in the organisation being run to an acceptable standard. The ministry has a responsibility for what happens on ministry property and the ministry will give formal permission for the organisation to use the premises. It is recognised that even if an organisation is independent of the ministry, the public's perception may be that it is still a ministry organisation.

1.4 If a ministry has concerns that certain practices breach child protection guidelines, such concerns should be raised with the organisation leader and/or the headquarters of the organisation. If the concerns are not satisfactorily dealt with the host ministry should withdraw permission for use of the premises by that organisation.

1.5 While the ministry is not to be responsible for the appointment of leaders to an independent organisation it is good practice for the Designated Person to be informed annually (September) of the names of the leaders in writing.

2. Agreed criteria

It is suggested that the following criteria be agreed with independent organisations using ministry premises, e.g. Scouts, Guides, music lessons and other groups. It is the duty of the organisation to ensure that the premises are suitable and appropriate for planned activities. The organisation shall also seek to ensure that activities shall be carried out safely. Any safety concerns regarding the premises shall be notified by the organisation leader to the appropriate person within the ministry as soon as possible.

2.1 The organisation shall confirm to the ministry that it has adopted and consistently implements a child protection policy that accords with the standard of *Children First and Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector* (RI). A copy of the organisation's policy shall be supplied to the Designated Person.

2.2 The ministry shall supply to the organisation leader the names and contact details of the ministry officials responsible for the premises. The organisation shall supply to the Designated Person the names and contact details of all the leaders immediately following appointment. The organisation shall confirm that new appointees have been vetted where possible; that no information was received which debarred their appointment; and, that they have been found suitable to work with children and young people.

2.3 The organisation shall ensure that leaders and helpers in the organisation receive appropriate child protection training and are aware of the organisation's reporting procedures.

2.4 If a report has been made by the organisation of a child protection concern, suspicion or allegation through its procedures, the ministry Designated Person should be informed in confidence that a report has been made.

2.5 The organisation shall supply written confirmation from the insurer that adequate insurance cover is in place for the organisation's activities or written verification that the insurance guidelines of the organisation is accepted by the ministry at senior level.

2.6 A form of approval (sample below) shall be signed by the leader of the organisation and a ministry representative confirming that the conditions have been met. It is appropriate for this to be completed annually or at least every three years depending upon ministry requirements.

Agreement Form - Child Protection and Independent Organisations

Name of ministry

Name of independent organisation

Name of person in charge of organisation

Telephone

Time and place of organisation's meeting

Conditions

1. The organisation confirms that it has adopted and implements a child protection policy which accords with the standard of *Children First and Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector* (RI). A copy of the organisation's guidelines is now produced.
2. The ministry shall supply to the organisation leader the names and contact details of the ministry officials responsible for the premises and for child protection. The organisation shall supply annually (September) to the Designated Person the names and contact details of all leaders immediately following appointment. The organisation shall confirm that new appointees have been Garda Vetted where possible; that no information was received which debarred their appointment and that they have been found suitable to work with children and young people.
3. The organisation shall ensure that leaders/helpers in the organisation shall receive appropriate child protection training and are aware of the reporting procedures.
4. If a report of a child protection concern is made by the organisation through its procedures, the ministry Designated Person should be informed in confidence that a report has been made.
5. The organisation confirms that adequate insurance cover is in place for its activities, or written verification that the insurance policy is accepted by the ministry at senior level.
6. The organisation shall seek to ensure that activities shall be carried out safely. Any safety concerns regarding the premises shall be notified by the organisation leader to the appropriate person within the ministry as soon as possible.

We confirm that the ministry and the organisation agree to the above conditions.

Signed (Organisation Leader)

Date

PLEASE TICK AS APPLICABLE:

The ministry grants the above organisation use of the premises.

OR

The ministry grants the above organisation use of the premises in accordance with the attached agreement.

Signed

Date

(Senior Leader)

Child Protection Yearly Evaluation Form

A. Details

Date _____

Pastor/Leader:

Name _____

Address _____

Tel Home _____ Office _____ Mobile _____

Fax _____ Email _____

Training Attended _____

Approximate Date and Venue _____

Designated Person Details

Name _____

Address _____

Tel Home _____

Tel Office _____

Mobile _____

Fax _____

Email _____

Attended Panel Training: Yes No

Approximate Date and Venue _____

Deputy Designated Person Details

Name _____

Address _____

Tel Home

Tel Office

Mobile

Fax

Email

Attended Panel Training: Yes No

Approximate Date and Venue

Present at evaluation (BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Ministry Leaders etc.	
1	5
2	6
3	7
4	8

Raising awareness of Child Protection Guidelines in the ministry

See Child Protection Guidelines - **9.3.1**

1. How is the ministry being informed about the implementation of Ministry's Child Protection Policy? (please tick)

Ministry newsletter How often? _____
Letter to parents How often? _____
Sermon/talks How often? _____
Other ways - please state: _____

2. Have the Leadership Team and Designated Person received any Child Protection Guidelines updates? Yes No

3. Did any action need to be taken arising from the updates?

4. How are young people being made aware of the role of Designated Person?

5. How are all stakeholders being made aware of the role of Designated Person?

6. Have all workers: Yes No
(a) received a copy of the relevant sections of Ministry's Child Protection Policy?
(b) received training?

Who carried out the training?

(e.g. Designated Person, person appointed by the Designated Person)

7. What plans has the Leadership Team and Designated Person for the future to keep the ideas and requirements of Ministry's Child Protection Policy:

(a) in the consciousness of the ministry?

(b) in the ongoing training of workers?

B. Record Keeping

See Child Protection Guidelines - **9.1.2**

	Yes	No
1. Is a filing system of records of workers with children/young people in place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is a record kept of the children and workers who attend the organisations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Are attendance registers, consent forms and completed accident and incident books and documents related to recruitment kept securely?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Have all workers in a post at present signed a declaration (see 9.2.4) regarding receipt of a copy of Ministry's Child Protection Policy and acknowledging a duty of care to the children attending their group?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Are these records kept securely?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Do all relevant Ministry Leaders have ready access to relevant documentation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

NB: All such records must be kept in line with Data Protection Act 1988.

C. New appointments

	Yes	No
1. In any new appointments, paid and voluntary:		
(a) was there a job description?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) were application forms used?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) were the applicants interviewed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) were references requested for each applicant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) was at least one reference checked by follow-up telephone calls?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) was any training offered and given to successful applicants?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g) if yes, by whom?		
<hr/>		
(h) was each person given copies of sections 5-8 of <i>Ministry's Child Protection Policy</i> ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(i) was a written acknowledgement of its receipt received and filed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(j) was a recognised probationary period agreed with the appointee?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(k) was Garda Vetting of applicants undertaken?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Has the Leadership Team encountered any difficulty in the recruitment area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, please indicate below:

D. General welfare/safety

	Yes	No
1. Is there a health and safety statement in place for the premises used by the children and young people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Was it reviewed recently?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Who undertook the review?		
<hr/>		
4. Has an evacuation procedure been introduced?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there notices to make people aware of the procedure?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are assembly point(s) marked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Has a fire drill been held in the last year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Is there a properly stocked first-aid kit on the premises? If yes, who maintains it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
8. Is an accident report system in place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where is the accident/incident book kept?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
9. Is there a procedure for advising the Leadership Team of recommendations from the workers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

E. Insurance

NB The ministry should confirm that the ministry's insurer provides cover in the event of a civil claim and/or criminal charge against the ministry, Leadership Team or any other party covered by the ministry insurances being taken as a result of an allegation of child abuse or other misconduct against someone involved in ministry activities.

1. Has your ministry confirmed that the ministry insurance has been extended to provide cover relating to child protection issues? Yes No

2. Who is the ministry insurer?

3. If the answer to question 1 above is no, how will you be covered if a case is taken against the ministry?

4. Is there a formal agreement with any outside group using ministry premises and having children in attendance? Yes No

F. Implementing procedures

- | | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Have anyone been contacted by adults or young people in connection with any form of abuse linked to children in this ministry? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. a) If yes, has everything been recorded in writing and filed? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Have the statutory authorities been informed? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Has the Pastor/Leader been informed? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

G. Training requirements

1. Does the ministry need additional leaders to be trained? Yes No
If yes, please indicate approximate numbers

2. Is there an area in which present leaders feel they need further training? Yes No
If so, please indicate

3. Is there an annual review of training needs for leaders? Yes No

4. What ongoing training for leaders is being provided by the ministry?

H. Specific suggestions from the ministry

Please keep this evaluation form and file it with your ministry records.

Ministry Leader's signature

Date
