



Communityworks Youth Services

Communityworks Youth Services Children and Youth Workers Handbook

We recognise that all children and young people have the right to be safe, protected and cared for in a way that will help them grow and develop into adults who are secure and mature individuals who can serve their community effectively.

To support this we have adopted the following principles.

We believe good practice includes:

- Observing and listening to the children and young people with whom you work
- Talking to them, enjoying their company, playing with them, being aware of their likes, dislikes and concerns
- Registering the children and young people who are there each week
- Maintaining up to date health forms and data protection forms for them
- Keeping a group logbook of the things that happen to them while you are working with them e.g illnesses, upsets, things which went well and things that didn't
- Having a weekly group session plan
- Recording any accident, however minor, in the accident and incident book
- Informing their parents about things that happen to them, including accidents, upsets or their personal achievements
- Recording concerns or suspicious injuries that you notice on children and young people
- Reporting concerns or injuries to the Designated Child Protection Officer promptly
- Attending group training courses offered
- Having a regular fire drill and completing a regular risk assessment on premises
- Refusing to smack a child even if a parent asks you to – it puts you at risk to agree to such requests and it is against our policies
- If a child or young person is disruptive and the parent is present you should ask them to deal with it
- If children or young people become ill or need help away from the main group you should always inform your co-workers that you are taking the child aside. Ask another worker to come with you. Tell the parents if you have spoken to a child privately, particularly if it involves a discipline issue – tell them what you have said and why.
- Be careful about leaving other people in charge while you are away
- Teenagers should not be left on their own with children.
- Indoor Ratios
Age 0-2 = 1 adult: 3 children, Age 2-3's = 1 adult: 4 children, Age 3-7's = 1 adult: 8 children, Age 8 plus 2 adults: 20 children
- Outdoor ratios
Age 0-2 = 1 adult: 3 children, Age 2-3's = 1 adult: 4 children, Age 3-7's = 1 adult: 6 children, Age 8 -13's 2 adults: 15 children
- Over 15 children 1 adult for every extra 8 or part group of 8
Over 13's Up to 20 children -2 adults
Over 20 children 1 adult for every extra 10 children or young people or part group of 10



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What about parents?

As you are looking after children and young people on their parents' behalf it is vital to develop a good working relationship with parents from the outset. We will make parents aware of the policy and principles of good practice in this guide through our website and information sheets. In keeping with The Children Order (Northern Ireland) 1995 we seek to work in partnership with parents. The Order has 5 key values:

- Partnership – Statutory bodies, voluntary bodies, including churches, and parents, should work together to ensure children and young people are protected and receive the most appropriate service for their needs.
- Protection – Children and young people have the right to be protected from harm
- Prevention – it is better to be proactive and to ensure that policies and practice in all work with children prevent harm coming to children – prevention is better than cure – as the old adage says.
- Paramount – the needs of the child are paramount and should be considered before the needs of adults because children cannot always look after their own needs
- Parents – parents have parental responsibility for their children – this is a shift away from the idea that parents have simply rights to do what they want with their children – parents are expected to fulfil their responsibilities and statutory bodies should support them to fulfil this.

We recognise that parents understand their own children best and that it is in the best interests of the child for workers and parents to work together. We believe that for our church and community groups the principles in the order are also in keeping with our church values and the Bible. The Bible encourages us to recognise the importance of a parent's influence and their responsibility for their child.

We seek to do this by:

- Explaining how we will provide for children attending church groups and events
- Consulting parents about their child's needs, likes, dislikes, health activities and progress
- Seeking their views on child management or arrangements
- Keeping written records regarding accidents or personal care that a parent can see if they require
- Communicating the positive things that a child has done

This makes it easier for parents to discuss any pastoral concerns, special needs or problems that a child might have.

What about a child who arrives distressed or injured?

If you notice that a child is distressed or injured when it arrives with you, you should discuss this with the parents. This is in your interest as well as the child's. If you are not satisfied with the parent's explanation you should discuss this with the Designated Child Protection Officer. In an extreme case if you discover that the child needs immediate medical attention you should seek medical help as soon as possible. It will then be the responsibility of medical staff or the police to discuss the matter with the child's parents.

If a child or young person arrives and is ill you should ask the parents to take them home immediately in case they are infectious.



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Why do we have to do all this child protection stuff?

In recent years several cases of child abuse involving members of the Church have come to light. It is the role of all congregations to care for and protect children from such harm. Jesus placed a high priority on the care and protection of children and we should do the same.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse can take many forms. It can involve direct actions by an adult, such as physically beating a child or it can happen when an adult fails to act, for example by failing to provide proper food or care for a child. Children can be abused by parents, carers, known adults, strangers or other children. Abuse can be an isolated incident or a chronic and repeated pattern of behaviour. A basic definition is that:

“Child abuse is ill treatment or neglect which leads to physical, sexual or emotional injury or harm to a child” The law states that someone is considered a child until their 18th birthday.

Abuse can be divided into the following categories:

Physical Abuse

This occurs where adults physically hurt or injure a child or fail to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child. It can include hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, biting, attempted suffocation or drowning. Giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison are also forms of physical abuse.

Sexual Abuse

Children can be abused by adults who use them to meet their own sexual needs. Examples would include sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral and anal sex or fondling. Showing children pornographic videos or magazines is also sexually abusive.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the actual, potential or severe rejection or emotional ill treatment of a child which results in severe adverse effects on the social, behaviour and emotional development of a child. It includes persistent lack of love and affection, rejection, criticism, shouting, threatening and taunting. While all abuse includes some element of emotional abuse in some circumstances it may also be the main type of abuse suffered by a child.

Signs which might arouse your suspicions would include:

- Bruising, cuts or burns on the child’s body, especially if these are in place where you would not expect a child to accidentally injure itself.
- Sudden changes in behaviour, for example the child becoming very quiet or withdrawn.
- Aggressive behaviour, severe tantrums, an air of detachment or don’t care attitude.
- Loss of weight
- The child being inappropriately dressed or ill-kempt
- The child being dirty or smelly



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- Sexually explicit behaviour, for example playing games or showing an awareness which is inappropriate for the child's age
- Excessive masturbation or aggressive and inappropriate sex play
- The child only seems happy with you
- The child being kept away from school or normal social activities and having few friends
- The child does not trust adults especially those who are closest
- "Tummy Pains" with no medical cause
- Eating problems, including over eating or loss of appetite
- Disturbed sleep, nightmares and bedwetting
- Sings of depression or emotional withdrawal
- Relationships with adults which appear to be secretive and exclude others
- Comments that the child has made about a relationship or action of an adult that seem inappropriate

As you can see given the general nature of these signs and symptoms of abuse it would be very difficult for a children's worker to decide if a child is being abused. Some of these signs may appear in children who are not being abused but are ill or under stress. Most though not all, abused children will exhibit a cluster of these symptoms. The key thing to remember is to seek help at the earliest possible stage. If you are at all concerned about a child in your care please turn to the section in this guide on "what to do if I suspect abuse?"

Remember that you should also do everything in your power to protect yourself against misunderstanding or allegations of improper behaviour.

Some simple principles that establish safe boundaries for a children's worker include:

RECOGNISING

Some children are naturally more affectionate and relaxed about physical contact than others so it's important to be aware of the messages that the child is sending. If you become aware that a child is uncomfortable about something you are doing, then you should stop at once. Things that adults think are fun are often disliked by children, for example tickling.

RESPECTING

Children are not passive participants in their development; they are active, socially aware beings who have an increasing contribution to make to their own care. When the child needs assistance with a personal function such as toileting or during sudden illness always seek to involve the child by asking the child's permission or explaining your actions. Asking permission encourages the child's participation in its own care. Explaining actions can serve to eliminate any confusion over why an event occurred. Communicating like this shows respect for the child and promotes the child's independence. It shows that the child's wishes are important and that adults do take their wishes into account. It also helps you avoid performing unnecessary personal functions which the child is able to do itself.

RECORDING

Routine recording should include brief notes on accidents, unusual events or personal functions. You will automatically tell the parents about these things anyway and your records will help make it clear to the parents what has occurred and why.



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Children have the following rights:

- To be safe
- To protect their own bodies
- To say if someone is doing something to them that they feel is wrong
- To get help against bullies
- To tell
- To be believed
- Not to keep secrets

It is good to work out a set of rules with parents for the children to follow when they are out alone and this can be reinforced to the younger children too.

A children's worker can help children to learn how to protect themselves and to develop confidence and independence. This is good practice as it will not only benefit the child but will make the parent's job easier, especially when you are working with school age children who may go out to play alone. Kidscape provide excellent materials for encouraging "Good Sense Defence" in children. These would be of help to parents and children's workers in preparing children to look after themselves.

Some simple advice would include:

- Encouraging them that it is right to tell adults about any worries they have.
- When they are out without an adult to stay together with other children in groups or pairs.
- Always take the same route home from school.
- If they are in danger and someone is hurting or threatening them to run, scream, shout, kick, punch or lie. Their safety is all that matters.
- They can choose for themselves who they want or allow to kiss, cuddle and hug them. They shouldn't be made to do any of these things against their will, especially where they feel it's wrong or it is making them unhappy.
- By building up an open, respecting and trusting relationship with them you will create an atmosphere where they feel able to come to you for help and protection, whoever is hurting them.

Putting the child's needs first will not spoil the child. It is just another way of recognising that children have the same right to be heard as adults. Caring adults who take the time to listen to what children are trying to tell them will help make the child's world a safe and secure place to be and will help them to understand something of the heart of God towards them.



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What do I do if I am concerned about a child?

If you suspect abuse:

DO's	DONT'S
<p>Do believe a child if they claim someone is hurting or upsetting them. Listen to the child. Children are reliable informants and need to be supported in such areas.</p>	<p>Don't question probe or push the child for explanations. You may alter the child's account which may become evidence in a criminal trial.</p>
<p>Do ask parents to give you an explanation.</p>	<p>Don't be afraid to ask the parents for an explanation.</p>
<p>Do keep a written record.</p>	<p>Don't be afraid of writing down your concerns</p>
<p>Do share your worries with the church designated childcare co-ordinator if you're not satisfied.</p>	<p>Don't be afraid of voicing your concerns. Your actions could save a child from terrible physical or emotional trauma.</p>
<p>Do continue to provide a warm and friendly relationship with the child.</p>	<p>Don't assume someone else will help the child. You may be the only one who realises what is happening.</p>
<p>Do act quickly.</p>	<p>Don't Delay. You could be putting a child at further risk.</p>

How are our staff and volunteers recruited?

All staff and volunteers fill in an application form and then attend for interview. They provide two referees who are contacted by Communityworks Youth Services. They agree to and fill in an Access NI check and the DCPO sends off the check to Access NI. It is only when all of the above has been completed and passed that staff and volunteers will proceed to work with Children and Young People. Staff and volunteers will attend induction courses and will be subject to a probationary period of 1 year.

Who are our Designated Child Protection staff?

The following people are available at any time to help or to discuss any concerns you have about any child protection issue:

Edith Bell

Designated Child Protection Officer

Work - 028 9182 1721

Home – 028 9145 4758

Mobile – 07843236615

Jude Bell

Deputy Designated Child Protection Officer

Work - 028 9182 1721

Home – 028 9145 2632

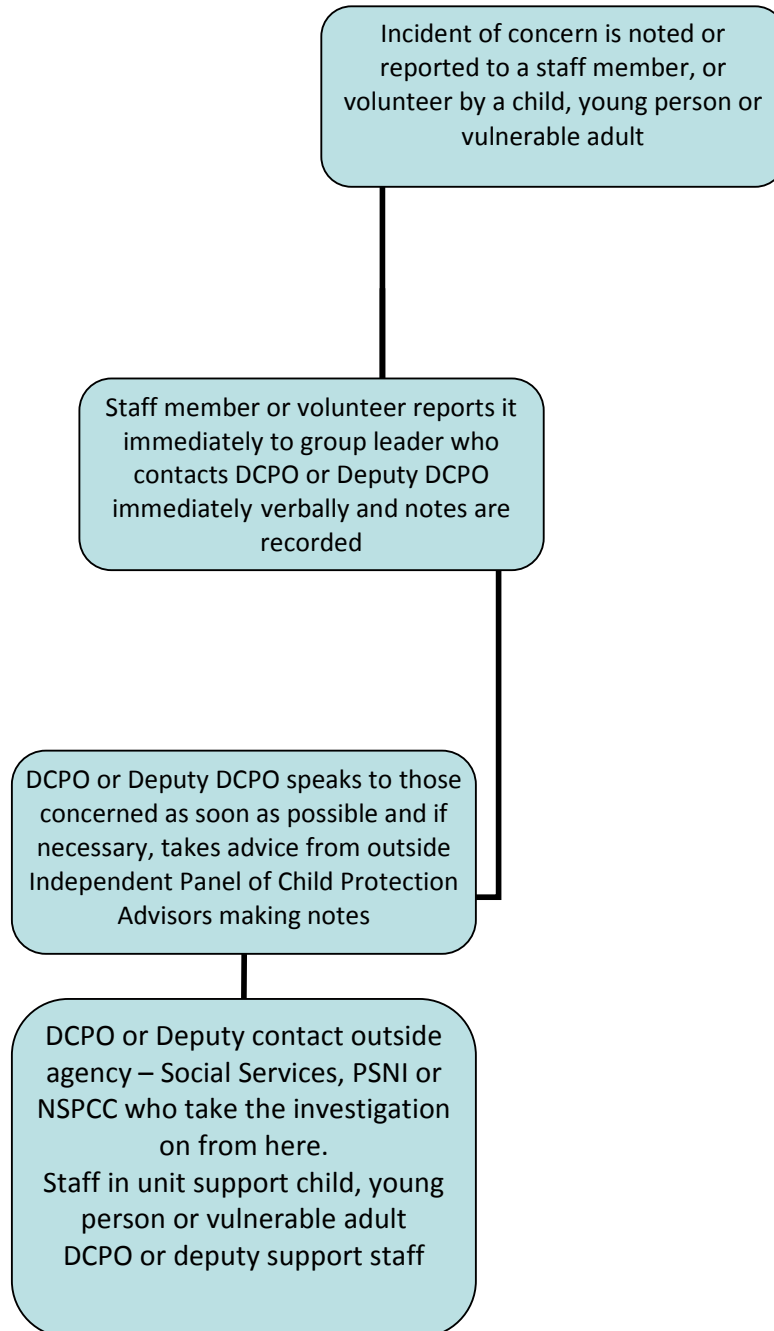
Mobile – 07890419642



Communityworks Youth Services

What happens when a child protection concern is reported?

The process for reporting concerns about Child Protection or Vulnerable Adults is as follows:





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Communityworks Youth Services Child Protection Policy and Complaints Procedure

- We believe that all children and young people have the right to be safe, protected and cared for in a way that will help them grow and develop into adults who are secure and mature individuals who can serve their community effectively.
- Communityworks Youth Services operates a Child Protection Policy in line with current arrangements in place in Northern Ireland and as an organisation complies with the standards set by Access NI.
- All of our workers and volunteers are subject to a rigorous recruitment and interview process and are required to undergo a full background check as carried out by Access NI. They are managed and monitored while in post.
- Workers and staff are trained annually in Child Protection Good Practice and subscribe fully to the Child Protection Practice outlined in Our Duty to Care.
- We have a Child Protection Policy which is reviewed and updated regularly. A full copy of the policy can be viewed at www.communityworksonline.com or can be obtained by phoning the Designated Child Protection Officer at the number given below.
- All parents receive this summary copy of our Child Protection Complaints Procedure.
- Parents who wish to make a complaint against a staff member or volunteer can do so by contacting Edith Bell, the Designated Child Protection Officer, at 028 9182 1721. You can also contact her by email at ed@communityworksonline.com
- Anyone wishing to make a complaint against the Designated Child Protection Officer or the Deputy may do so by contacting Stephen Smyth, Chair of the Management Committee at 028 9182 1721. You can contact him by email at info@communityworksonline.com
- Their complaint will be noted and investigated fully within 24 hours and parents will be informed of the outcome of the complaints procedure and the action taken by Communityworks Youth Services.



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Communityworks Youth Services Recruitment Procedure and Checks

Staff and volunteers seeking to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults within our services must submit themselves to the following procedures in order to work within the unit.

- Complete the standard Communityworks Youth Services application form fully, providing all information requested, including their national insurance number
- Provide evidence of their identity by production of a valid driving licence, passport or birth certificate
- Declare whether or not they have any past criminal convictions or cases pending against them
- Provide the names and addresses of two independent referees who will be contacted by Communityworks Youth Services and asked to complete a reference form in respect of them
- Contact referees to obtain their permission before their names are submitted to Communityworks Youth Services
- Ensure that the referees return the form to the Designated Officer within the time frame requested
- Attend for a selective interview as requested by the Designated Officer
- Submit themselves to an enhanced AccessNI form by filling in the documentation supplied by Communityworks Youth Services staff – all applications and checks will be treated confidentially
- Mandatory attendance at Induction and Child Protection Training
- **Applicants should note that they should not ask Directors of Communityworks Youth Services for references for posts as this would represent a conflict of interest**
- References, interview and AccessNI checks will inform the appointments process
- Communityworks Youth Services reserve the right to refuse to appoint any staff member or volunteer to a post if they do not meet the above criteria
- Appointed staff and volunteers will be expected to sign A Child Protection Policy agreement for the unit
- Staff and volunteer should note that copies of the Child Protection Policy and our complaints procedure are made available to children, young people and parents

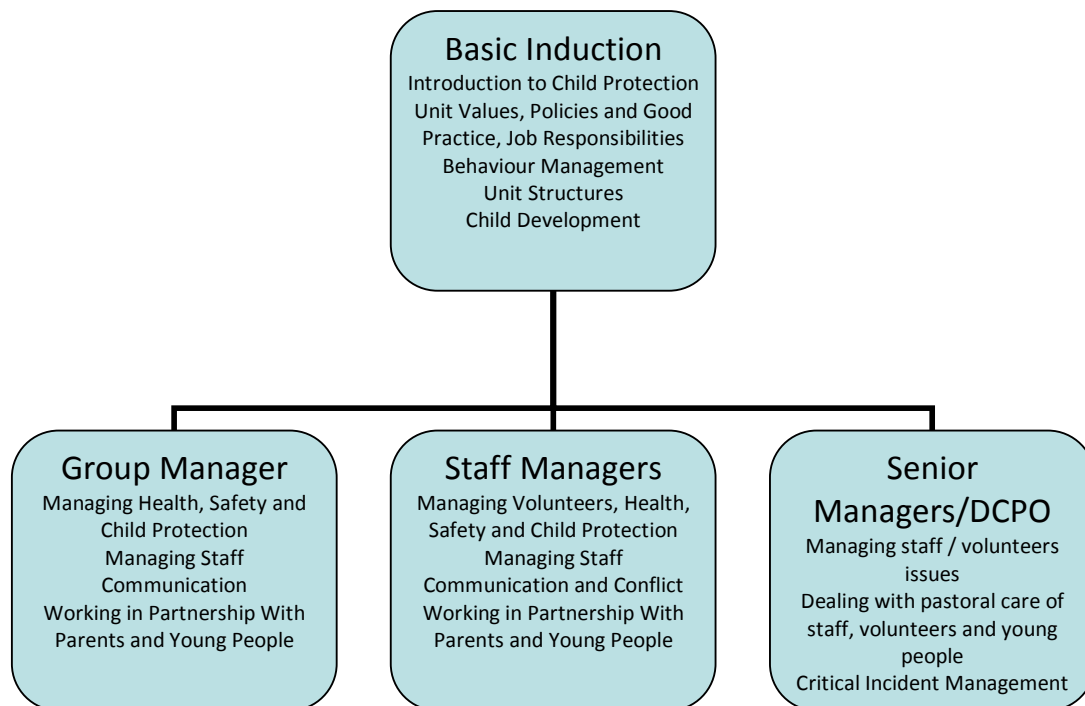


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Communityworks Youth Services Induction Process

Communityworks offers a mandatory induction programme for all staff and volunteers. It is offered at four levels:

- Basic Induction for all volunteer staff
- Group Manager Induction for volunteer group managers
- Staff Manager Induction for all paid staff and employees who manage groups and volunteers
- Senior Management Induction for the senior management team and directors who have responsibility for all aspects of the organisation including Critical Incident management, investigation and management of complaints and pastoral care of staff, volunteers and young people



All staff and volunteers will be expected to attend annual child protection training.