

Child Protection



Eaglais Phreispitéireach in Eirinn

Maynooth Community Church

Presbyterian
CHURCH IN IRELAND



Maynooth Community Church

Child Protection

MCC's Child Protection Statement

Maynooth Community Church greatly values and takes very seriously its responsibility to the children who come under our care. In every aspect of our church life our desire is to create a safe place for all children to enjoy and be nurtured with care, dignity and respect and to be free from any threat of mistreatment. MCC is committed to being an open and transparent community in all its dealings including the protection and security of the children in our care.

This document outlines the procedures and policies for child protection in MCC.

Introduction

Maynooth Community Church is a community of people from various backgrounds and traditions who are seeking to follow Jesus, enjoy God's presence together and share His love with others.

Our desire is to help people become wholehearted followers of Jesus.

At MCC we seek to:

Know and love God through **worship**.

Follow Jesus and become like Him through **Discipleship**.

Care for and equip one another through **Community**.

Serve others and build the Kingdom through **Mission**.

Our desire is that people in Maynooth young and old, would come to live lives fully submitted to Jesus as Lord and in so doing know the life that is truly life and invite others into it.

The role of youth ministry in Maynooth Community Church is to help the church fulfill its mission.

At MCC our young people are full members of the body and as such they are people who are fully part of the mission of God bringing the good news into their world.

Our hope is that MCC would help our young people to respond to God's love and glory with their whole lives. We seek to do this by living lives that embody the gospel (i.e. that Jesus is Lord of our lives in every area) and allowing God to reveal himself through us. A life submitted to the Lordship of Jesus looks like a life of love (e.g. Rom 13:10). Our goal therefore is to be a community of people who have an authentic love for others.

Child protection policy

Every adult working with children is responsible to know and fulfil the child protection policy. However in MCC there are 4 people who are responsible for overseeing the implementation of the policy structures.

Sinead Hussey - Administrative support
Anne Morrison - Designated point person
Keith McCrory - Pastor
Lorraine Neill - Youth worker

Every Child Needs:

Respect.
Physical Care.
Praise: Attention.
Trust.
Love.

Children With Special Needs

Maynooth Community Church has a Christian duty to be inclusive and to provide opportunities for children and young people of all abilities. Each ministry within the church needs to be aware that children and young people who have a disability can be at greater risk of abuse. They will often require more help with personal care, such as washing, dressing, toileting, feeding, mobility etc, may have limited understanding and behave in a non-age appropriate way. For example, a young person of 15 might behave in a manner more akin to a 5-6 year old, particularly in demanding cuddles or sitting on a worker's lap. Others experience difficulties in communication because they are blind, or deaf, and are reliant on physical contact for communication. Some may have severe learning difficulties. All these factors make it harder to uncover abuse when it is occurring and in setting boundaries which take into account the needs of those young people.

There is therefore a need for extra vigilance recognising that a worker may encounter the following difficulties:

- Children may not fully understand what is said to them, or may not be able to express themselves in ways that can be understood.
- The worker may not possess the appropriate personal communication skills (e.g. specialised spoken and non-verbal communication such as Makaton signs and symbols, Irish Sign Language etc.)
- The need for regular contact with the parents/carers.

There are a number of reasons why a child with a disability is more vulnerable to abuse:

- Children with disabilities tend to have more physical contact than those without disabilities (i.e. therapists, care workers) and may require higher levels of personal care.
- The definition of what constitutes abuse is wider for children with disabilities. (This can include force-feeding, financial abuse, over-medication and segregation).

The Question Of Appropriate Physical Contact

- As a general principle do not make unnecessary physical contact with young

people.

- Avoid physical contact which may be misconstrued by a young person or other observer.
- If you think it appropriate, offer comfort and reassurance to a child by placing a hand on a shoulder.
- If possible, ensure that you are not left alone with a child for long periods.
- If a child wishes to talk confidentially with you, at least ensure that another leader/ helper knows where you are and whom you are with.
- If possible try to remain visible to the other leaders/helpers.

It does not make sense to:

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others;
- Take children to your home without the child's parents and the leader of the organisation or other responsible person knowing. Never be on your own with children, always have another adult present.

Leaders and other staff should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- Make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child, even in fun;
- Let allegations made by a child go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

Note: It may sometimes be necessary for leaders to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or have disabilities. Except in an emergency, these tasks should be carried out only with the consent of parents. In such situations leaders need to be sensitive to the child and undertake personal care with the utmost discretion.

Control and Discipline:

When disciplining children and young people:

NEVER

- Use force (smack, hit)
- Discipline out of anger
- Use a "put-down" with children/young people
- Humiliate a child/young person in front of others
- Reject the child (reject only the behaviour)
- Allow some children to take all your time and energy
- Compare children with each other

ALWAYS

- Ask God for wisdom, discernment and understanding
- Pray for and with the child or young person
- Work on each individual child's positive characteristics
- Be a good role model and set a good example
- Take care to give quieter and well-behaved children attention
- Be consistent and work together as a team
- Ensure other leaders know what you have said – this avoids manipulation

Transport

- If transporting young people make sure that you have adequate passenger

liability cover.

- Private cars may be used so long as they are not used for hire or for carrying passengers for reward.
- Seat belts should be worn at all times. One seat belt per person.
- Avoid transporting a young person on your own. Try to ensure that another leader/ helper or other children/young people are with you.
- If a situation occurs when you have to transport a child alone, ensure other leaders/ helpers know that this is happening, and that the child is in the rear seat.
- Ensure that the appropriate level of supervision is provided when using mini-buses and coaches. Leaders must sit in the rear to have adequate control.

The Internet

Do's And Don'ts

- When designing a website, make clear what is available for copying or downloading. Do not refer to other inappropriate sites.
- Parental permission must be obtained before using any picture of a child/group of children on the website.
- Avoid using photos of individual children. In preference use a group photograph. However, do not use it if a child can be identified by their name or the location they are in. Names and addresses should not be given.
- Personal email or postal addresses, telephone or fax numbers must not be divulged.
- Check with the youth leader as to which children have permission from their parents to be texted by leaders. When texting children make sure to avoid any inappropriate content or anything which could be misconstrued.
- If web access is being provided for children or young people e.g. youth project providing a cyber café, then consider using filtering software (e.g. Netnanny, Cyberpatrol or Surfwatch) to prevent access to inappropriate web sites. Your Internet Service Provider may also have filtering software.
- If you are providing web access e.g. cyber café ensure that parental permission has been obtained.

General Safety

Safety is of prime importance during any activity.

Safety is everyone's responsibility.

Everyone should be aware of the following guidelines:

- There should be adequate supervision by a leader/helper of certain equipment e.g. table tennis tables, snooker tables etc.
- When using special equipment for your programme e.g. for 'one-off' activities such as trampolining, bouncy castle etc, ensure there is adequate supervision by trained leaders/helpers. Remove/avoid items which may cause injury.
- High risk activities require the written permission of parents/guardians in advance.
- If at all possible aim to have a trained first aider present.
- Where possible, leaders/helpers should be aware of any medication children are currently taking but this should not be given without written consent from parents or doctors.
- Leaders/helpers should also seek to obtain information concerning allergies and reaction to foods e.g. peanuts. Medication should be clearly marked, out of

reach of children and securely locked away.

- Be aware of the location of fire exits and ensure that they are 'unblocked'. Know where the nearest fire extinguishers are located. These must be checked regularly by a qualified person.
- During games or "ice-breakers", be aware of the risks of physical injury and guard against these.
- Young people must be supervised at all times by a leader/helper while in the kitchen area.
- Supervise the use of computers and printers. Agree guidelines for the use of emails. Agree the safe and appropriate use of mobile phones.
- Areas where maintenance work is taking place should never be used and where possible should be screened off.
- A telephone should, where possible, be installed on the premises for safety purposes.
- Each organisation should have an accident report book/form in which to record details of accidents/injuries/witnesses/date.

Dealing With Accidents

Many incidents that are brought to the leaders attention involve accidents or more minor problems. It is important that leaders know how to handle problems, no matter how minor, and that they are able to respond to more serious concerns.

- MCC has 3 incident report books and first aid kits one is kept in church (in the JAM box) the other in the MCC office cabinet. The 3rd is taken on trips/events outside our church buildings. There are also incident/accident report forms available from the office or youth leader. This book/form should be used for the recording of accidents, injuries and any action taken. Each entry should be signed by the leader in charge. It is good practice to inform the parents/guardian in person or by telephone of the accident and any action taken as soon as possible.
- **In the event that the incident involves alleged or suspected child abuse it is not appropriate to include an entry in the Accident/Incident Book. In this event the procedure outlined below should be followed.**

What Is Child Abuse?

There are four main kinds of child abuse -

Physical Abuse: occurs when an adult or other young person physically harms a child eg. kicks, beats or punches a child. Symptoms include:

- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Fear of physical contact, a shrinking back if touched

Neglect: the failure to provide for the shelter, safety, supervision and nutritional needs of the child. Child neglect may be physical, educational, or emotional neglect. Symptoms include:

- Constant hunger
- Inadequate clothing
- Constant tiredness
- Poor personal hygiene
- Wilful neglect

Emotional Abuse: occurs when the adult with responsibility for caring for the child says has marked inattention to the child's needs for affection, refusal of or failure to provide needed psychological care, spouse abuse in the child's presence, and permission of drug or alcohol use by the child. Symptoms include:

- Delays in physical, mental and emotional development
- Continual belittling of oneself
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain
- Neurotic behaviour

Sexual Abuse: any contact or interaction (physical, visual, verbal or psychological) of a sexual nature between a child/adolescent and an adult when the child/adolescent is being used for the gratification of the perpetrator or any other person. Symptoms include:

- Sexual knowledge that is inappropriate to the child's age
- Over-affectionate in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age
- Regression to younger behavioral patterns such as thumb sucking
- Self-harm

What To Do If You Are Concerned About A Child

- If you are concerned about a child or a young person, there is one thing you must not do, that is NOTHING.
- It is important that you take what the child says seriously and follow it up as soon as possible.
- Tell the leader in charge of the organisation. The leader in charge will then report the matter to the Designated Person.

The process of reporting a complaint

Stage 1 – Informing

Stage 2 – reporting to Church House

1) Report the complaint to the leader in charge

2) Complete the 'report of complaint' form which will be given to you by the leader in charge

3) Submit the report form to the 'designated person' and the church pastor. (in the event that one of these people are involved in the complaint please submit the form to the clerk of presbytery)

4) The pastor & designated person submits the complaint to the 'taking care' office in Church House

5) The pastor and designated person follow advice from church house regarding the next steps. (If they are unsatisfied they may take the complaint to the garda)

6) In conjunction with church house the pastor & designated person decide on appropriately informing parents and the alleged perpetrator.

DO

- Stay calm
- Listen and hear
- Give time to the child to say what they want
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling
- Write down what was said to you
- Tell the leader in charge of the organisation
- Keep a note of your report, giving the date, time, name of the individual who you have told and the course of action agreed
- The organisation leader will report to the Designated Person

DON'T

- Do not panic
- Do not make a child repeat the story unnecessarily
- Do not promise to keep secrets
- Do not enquire into details of the abuse
- Under no circumstances should you attempt to deal with the problem alone

Your responsibility is to report any concern you have about a child and to ensure that your concern is taken seriously.

What Should You Write Down?

A Report of Concern Form is available from the youth leader / Designated Person and should be completed by the concerned individual.

Try to have available:

- The name and address of any child you are concerned about;
- The nature of any injury or complaint;
- The need for medical attention (if any);
- Your reason for suspicion of abuse;
- What you have done already;
- Any other information you may have, such as the name of the child's GP, school etc.

Confidentiality

Who Needs To Know What?

- once you have filled in the report form the only other people who should know

of the report are the designated person and the minister (unless either of these people are involved in the compliant).

- Children must understand that you cannot promise confidentiality where they or someone else is at risk, they should however clearly be told that such information will be handled with utmost discretion and only the necessary people will know.
- If you are concerned that a person is in danger, either to themselves or from someone else, or you suspect that an offence may have been committed, you must talk to the Organisation Leader, or the Designated Person.

What Will Happen If You Report Something?

- The Designated Person, the leader and the minister will consider your report and then decide what to do.
- They will do only what is in the best interests of the child or young person, this will include contact with parents/carers.
- If what you have reported is very serious, they may have to talk to the police or to Social Services about it.

The process of validation for all leaders & volunteers:

Stage 1 - Application	Stage 2 - Training
EVERY leader & helper:	EVERY leader & helper
1) Completes the garda vetting form and applies for clearance	4) Attends the child protection training course "taking care" at least once every 3 years.
2) Completes the MCC youth volunteers application form	NB: Child protection training will be offered either in MCC or LPC every 6 months.
3) if the applicant receives clearance from the garda they are then interviewed for approval by an elder.	Ongoing refreshment and evaluation of our policies will be part of the youth team's fabric.
	Once a Year our statement of child protection will be communicated to the wider congregation publically.

Church Insurance

A Church represents a complex risk due to the diversity of activity that goes on within and without it's walls.

Maynooth Community Church has its public liability insurance via the Aon group Dublin (ecclesiastical). A copy of our insurance policy can be found in the office under 'I' for insurance. Our policy number with Ecclesiastical is 62/iXC/9140926.

Public Liability

This section of cover is the main area under which most claims for bodily injury or loss of or damage to the property of a third party arising from Church run activities will fall.

Summary of our Cover

Limit of indemnity: Public liability €6,500,000. Product liability €6,500,000. This indemnity is valid within the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and the Mainland UK.

Extension of Cover: MCC's policy includes an extension of cover to indemnify us for our services and other meetings in the Maynooth Post –Primary School

Legal Expenses: Limit of indemnity is €150,000.00.

Our insurance policy is designed to cover all those Church type activities that have been undertaken for years such as team relay games, football, volleyball, basketball, rambling, Sunday School days away, visits to the swimming pool, pony trekking at approved Centers, weekend retreats etc etc. However, it is not designed to automatically include hazardous activities such as rock climbing or canoeing and as otherwise indicated below and being insured does not mean we do not have to be careful about how we go about our ministries.

The day-to-day activities of all other affiliated Church organizations fall under the Church policy and therefore are subject to its exclusions, conditions and warranties.

It should be remembered that the policy of insurance in place belongs to the "Church" and not to any other legal entity. Although an organisation may be affiliated to the Church if it is subject to the rules and regulations of a separate board of trustees or to a separate and distinct code of conduct for example, at law such an organisation may be considered a legal entity in its own right and therefore would have to be insured under a standalone policy.

If any of our organisations within the Church wish to undertake a hazardous activity they should ensure that the Property and Finance Team Secretary is informed well in advance to ensure that any necessary insurance extension can be put in place.

Personal Accident

Personal Accident cover is provided for officers/leaders of the Church who may suffer injury during a Church organised activity. The exclusion of hazardous activities equally applies to this section of cover.

"Hazardous Activities"

In the list that follows we have detailed not only the most obvious type of activities that would be excluded but also those for which we have received enquiries over

the years.

We have categorised these into high/medium and low risk.

Hopefully you will appreciate that the type of activities listed within the “high” category are those that could not constitute a “normal Church type activity”. As such it has not been possible in the past to persuade insurers to offer cover, unless they are undertaken at outdoor pursuit’s centres that provide their own equipment, leadership and insurance.

For the activities listed in the other categories cover can usually be included following referral to Bartholomew & James.

Referral to us may simply involve the provision of some risk management advice on the one hand or result in the payment of an additional premium on the other.

For those activities that are referred to us we often will require the following additional information:

- Leader numbers, experience & qualifications
- Number of children
- Supervision ratios
- Dates & timescale
- Information on any past incidents

High Risk Activities:

Water Sports Regattas Flying Hang Gliding Hot Air Ballooning Parachuting
Any air-side activity Hunting on horseback Motor Competitions Motor Cycling
Mountaineering Cliff or Rock Climbing Hazardous Activity weekends Potholing
Racing other than on foot Bonfires Firework Displays Use of firearms including
Clay Pigeon Shooting Use power driven machinery Winter Sports Physical Contact
Sports (eg boxing, fencing, martial arts) Overseas Building Projects Mountain
Biking Rugby American Football Skateboarding

Medium Risk Activities:

Bouncy Castles/Bungy Runs & other inflatable equipment Tractor Rides
Gymkhana/pony rides/Rodeo Bull Archery/Rifle Shooting/Crockery Smashes/Darts
Stall Mini Assault Courses, indoor and outdoor Fairground Rides Building Projects
deemed to go beyond routine maintenance Ice Skating
Overseas Travel

Low Risk Activities:

Art Exhibitions/Flower Festivals/Auctions Sponsored Walks/Fun Runs
The list should not be considered exhausted. Any similar activities to those listed
will be treated in the same manner.

Should the Church feel that any particular activity is hazardous or outside the scope of a ‘normal church activity’ the details should be referred to us.

Apart from Activities, other commonly asked questions include:

Use of Vehicles

Where non-Church owned vehicles are used on Church “business” insurance cover should be provided by the vehicle driver’s policy. The driver’s policy must therefore

be adequate and not rendered invalid by, for example, overloading. It would be prudent for the vehicle owner to inform his/her car insurance company of their role as a Youth Leader – for which you should not encounter additional terms being imposed. We also suggest that the Church may wish to make leaders and others aware of this issue. If so we can upon request provide a sample letter for your assistance.

Indemnity Agreements

If asked to sign one – don't. Commonly such agreements attempt to impose a liability on the Church for matters not only outside your control but also beyond common law and therefore beyond the protection afforded by your insurance policy.

Ages

Our policy does not contain any restrictions in cover relating to the age of children attending Church Organisations.

Adult to Child Supervision Ratios

Our policy does not contain specific guidance on ratios however the general "reasonable care condition" applies. Reasonable Care would be judged on the basis of the recommended ratios set out within Taking Care.

RECOMMENDED RATIOS

0-2 years = 1 staff to 3 children

2-3 years = 1 staff to 4 children

3-7 years = 1 staff to 8 children or 1 staff to 6 children for outdoor activities.

8 + years = 2 staff (preferably one of each gender) for up to 20 children/young people.

There should be one additional staff member for every ten extra children and or young people or part thereof.

Cover Away from Church

Non-hazardous activities [such as day trips/ Church week-ends] are covered free from charge.

Church Fetes

Generally the events undertaken at Church Fetes are considered non-hazardous and are therefore covered automatically. If however the likes of a Bouncy Castle is to be used, then this should be referred.

Maintenance Work/Building Projects/Overseas

Additional Insurances may be required. Refer to Bartholomew & James for specific advice.

Child Protection

The PCI Child Protection Guidelines should be adopted and implemented as these are now considered to be the yardstick on which any decision would be made, with regard to where Liability rests.

Generally the Church should be complying as far as reasonably practicable with all appropriate Health & Safety and other legislation in order to ensure a safe environment remains available to users of the premises. Youth groups can play an important part in this process by, in particular, reporting defects in premises to an

appointed person. A joint liaison approach between Church Committee and Youth Organisations will benefit all in the mitigation of hazards that could have the potential to cause injury or loss.

Claims

Incidents can happen that result in a claim against the Church. Churches should therefore have a formal reporting procedure for incidents that result in injury, loss or damage. Such incidents should then be reported to Bartholomew & James in order to protect your interests should a formal claim be taken at some time in the future.



Anything written on this form will be held in confidence. The information required is to help MCC leaders and volunteers meet the specific needs of your child and to honour our child protection act.

I give permission for my child to attend Sunday night youth group
YES / NO

I give permission for my child to spend time with MCC leaders & Volunteers outside youth group (NB.providing child protection guidelines are being fulfilled) EG meeting in manor mills after school for hot chocolate, sports on the green etc.
YES / NO

If yes please agree to one of the following statements:

I give permission for my child to be contacted directly by an MCC Leader / Volunteer? YES / NO

I give permission for my child to be contacted ONLY when I have been contacted first. YES / NO

Child's full name _____

Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Child's mobile number (optional) _____

Name of Parent(s) or Guardian(s) _____

Home Number _____

Mobile Number _____

Emergency contact number _____

Second Emergency contact:

Name _____

Number _____

Relationship to child _____

Name & phone number of child's GP _____

Details of any known conditions, allergies etc (eg. Asthma, diabetes, epilepsy) and any medication being taken:

Any other special needs, requirements or directions that would be helpful for the leaders to know about:

Agreement:

I will inform the leaders of any important changes to my child's health, medication or needs and also of any changes to the above address and contact numbers.

In the event of an illness or accident, having parental responsibility for the above named child, I give permission for first aid to be administered where considered necessary by a trained first aider, if available, or medical treatment to be administered by a suitably qualified medical practitioner.

If I cannot be contacted and my child should require emergency hospital treatment, I authorise an adult leader to sign on my behalf any written form of consent required by the hospital. However, I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible.

During the time your child will spend with us, photographs may be taken for general church purposes and for your child's photograph to be taken unless otherwise informed.

I confirm that the above details are correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of parent / guardian _____

Date: _____



Maynooth Community Church
Special event / Residential
parental consent form

Section 1 (to be completed by MCC Leader)

MCC group: (eg JAM/SPI/Youth): _____

Details of the trip / activity: _____

Date of trip / activity: _____

Cost (if any): _____

Collection arrangements: _____

Section 2 (to be completed by parent or guardian)

I note the arrangements stated above and give permission for
_____ to take part in this trip / activity.

Please indicate details of any known medical conditions, allergies, special needs or requirements:

In the event of illness or accident, having parental responsibility for the above named child, I give permission for first aid to be administered where considered necessary by a trained first aider, if available, or medical treatment to be administered by a suitably qualified medical practitioner.

If I cannot be contacted and my child should require emergency hospital treatment, I authorise an adult leader to sign on my behalf any written form of consent required by the hospital. However, I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible.

Signed (parent/guardian) _____

Relationship to child: _____

Contact telephone numbers: Home: _____ Mobile: _____



Maynooth Community Church
Accident / Incident Form

Presbyterian
CHURCH IN IRELAND

This form should be completed immediately after any accident or significant incident. The leader/volunteer should discuss with the minister / church leader what follow up action is necessary.

Date & Time of incident: _____

Name, contact details and ages of those involved in the incident:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Where did this incident take place? _____

Name of MCC group involved: (eg JAM/SPI/Youth): _____

Name, address & number of person in charge at the time:

Name & contact details of the person normally responsible for the group (if different from the above).

Who witnessed the incident?:

Name _____

Name _____

Address: _____

Address _____

Tel. No. _____

Tel. No. _____

Describe the incident (include injuries received and any first aid or medical treatment given) continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Have you retained any defective equipment?

Yes No None involved (please circle)

If so, where is it being kept and by whom? _____

What action have you taken to prevent a reoccurrence of the incident?

Is the site or premises still safe for your group to use? Yes No (please circle)

Is the equipment still safe for you group to use? Yes No

Have the parents / carers been informed? Yes No

Date & Time of parents being informed: _____

Has MCC's designated person been informed? Yes No

Has MCC's Minister been informed? Yes No

Has MCC's Leader in charge been informed? Yes No

Signature of leader completing the incident form: _____ Date: _____

Signature of person in charge of the group at the time of incident: _____ Date: _____

Read & signed by minister _____ Date: _____





**Maynooth Community Church
Children / Young people's
Leader / Volunteer register**

Date: _____

Name	Address	Telephone number	Date of commencement	Date of resignation within the last year	Position in organisation

