



Child Protection Policy

This policy statement is aimed at providing a safe environment where children and young people may enjoy social contact as well as personal and spiritual development.

Adults selected to work within youth and children's ministry programmes should be secure in knowledge that they have the full support of the Kirk Session.

1. Adoption of Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) Child Protection Guidelines 'Taking Care'

The Kirk Session of Hillsborough Presbyterian Church has adopted The Presbyterian Church in Ireland's 'Taking Care Two' guidelines (Appendix 1), approved by the General Assembly and revised in 2011. All organisations should be issued with a copy of the Guidelines and are expected to adhere to them. The Kirk Session will review the implementation of the guidelines every three years (or when advised to do so by PCI).

2. Leadership

The Kirk Session believes that the selection procedures outlined in section 5 of the Taking Care Two Guidelines greatly assist the assessment of a person's suitability to work with children and young people. As a result of implementing such procedures, leaders and helpers within this congregation will be more assured of their position and of the confidence placed in them by the Kirk Session.

The following procedures must be followed for the appointment of leaders/helpers who preferably should be 18 years and over. The Kirk Session

of will consider the appointment of 16-18 year olds (provided they are not left in a supervisory capacity).

- All prospective leaders will be required to complete an Access NI form.
- Applicants will be required to provide 2 referees who are not relatives. (All confidential records e.g. applications and references will be stored safely by the Church Co-ordinator.)
- The candidate will be interviewed by the organisational leader and a representative from Kirk Session. The application will then be given to the Minister, and forwarded on to The Kirk Session for approval. If approved, the application will be signed by the Clerk of Session and the Access NI form will be sent to PCI's Taking Care office. Upon reply from PCI, the Kirk Session will appoint the candidate if appropriate and will correspond with the candidate regardless of outcome.
- All candidates will be on probation for the initial 6 months in post.
- The Church's Child Protection Policy will be provided and explained to all candidates.

3. Reporting of Concerns

The leaders in each of our organisations will be fully conversant with the referral procedure where there is concern about the welfare of a child as outlined in section 3 of the Taking Care Two guidelines.

4. Code of Practice

Each organisation will be expected to comply with the Good Standards of Practice outlined in section 7 of the Taking Care Two guidelines.

5. Parental Consent Forms

Organisational leaders must ensure that Parental Consent Forms are completed at the commencement of each session for each child attending organisations. All organisations should use the standard Parental Consent Form for Hillsborough Presbyterian Church (Appendix 2). On completion this should be returned to the Church Co-ordinator, and stored securely, with a copy of the form being given to the appropriate organisational leader(s).

Special Consent Forms will be issued for any 'off premises' activity and/or residential. Leaders in charge will store these forms in a safe place.

The leader should always take both the copy of the Parental Consent form and the Special Consent Form on any outings, as these forms have all the information required and consent for emergency treatment if required.

6. Designated Person(s)

The Kirk Session has appointed a Designated Person, Joyce McKee, who will provide consultation, advice and support to organisations and to the Kirk Session on matters concerning welfare of children and young people. The Kirk Session will keep organisational leaders updated with the name of the Designated Person(s). Any matter brought to the attention to the Designated Person will be treated in strict confidence. Information will only be divulged where there is a legitimate need to know.

7. Health and Safety

The Kirk Session expects organisation to adhere to the guidance on safety matters outlined in section 9 of the Taking Care Two guidelines. Health and Safety checks of the premises will be made regularly by the Health, Safety and Hygiene Sub-Committee.

8. Transport

Organisations are expected to adhere to the guidance on safety matters outlined in section 7.3 of the Taking Care Two guidelines relating to use of private cars and minibuses for transporting children to and from youth activities.

9. Residentials

Guidance on residential trips is provided in section 7.4 of the Taking Care Two guidelines and will be followed in all residential trips (and sleep-over situations on site) organised by Hillsborough Presbyterian Church.

10. Use of Technology

Photography and Video

Permission (written) must be sought from parent/guardian before taking or recording any photographs or video footage of children. It should also be made clear the purpose of the photographs or video, the means by which they will be displayed if at all, and who might be viewing the photos or video. This permission will be sought through the annual consent form.

Mobile Phones

Organisations are expected to adhere to the guidance on communication with young people via mobile phones in section 8.5 of the Taking Care Two guidelines relating to the appropriate use of technology.

Social Media and Email

All Youth and Children's organisations must adhere to our Social Media Usage Policy (Appendix 3) which was adopted by Kirk Session in September 2015.

11. Implementation and Review

The Kirk Session is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, and will review it every three years (or when advised to do so by PCI) with the leaders in charge of youth organisations.

Signed:

Ann Truesdale

(Clerk of Session)

Joyce McKee

(Designated Person)

Adopted by Kirk Session of Hillsborough Presbyterian Church – November 2015