

# St Brigid's Parish



## **Code of Conduct** to Safeguard our children, Young People and vulnerable adults

May 2013



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# Explanations, Definitions, Principles

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## Who is this Code for?

- For Clergy, Staff, Leaders and Volunteers working with children, young people, vulnerable adults on behalf of St. Brigid's Parish.
- For those on St Brigid's Parish premises where children, young people, vulnerable adults are present.
- For children, young people, vulnerable adults and their parents/carers



## What do we mean by child or young person?

The term 'Child' refers to those under the age of 18, as defined by the Children (NI) Order 1995. 'Young person' has no legal definition but is an expression used to differentiate between younger and older children.

## What do we mean by vulnerable adult?

The term 'Vulnerable Adult' refers to "... any person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be, unable to take care of himself or herself, or who is unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or exploitation. This may be because he or she has a mental health problem, a disability, a sensory impairment, is old or frail, or has a form of illness. **In addition**, the Diocese of Down and Connor recognises the need to safeguard other adults who may be in a vulnerable position and who may be in need of pastoral care, or be open to exploitation due to their current circumstances e.g. bereavement, relationship breakdown, undergoing counselling etc.

## What are the Diocesan Guiding Principles?

All children, young people and vulnerable adults have a fundamental right to be respected, nurtured, cared for and protected from harm. These basic rights are embedded in international and domestic laws and in our Gospel values. They are the cornerstones of our safeguarding policies and procedures.

In our parish we are committed to implementing safeguarding practices through compliance with statutory and diocesan policies and procedures.

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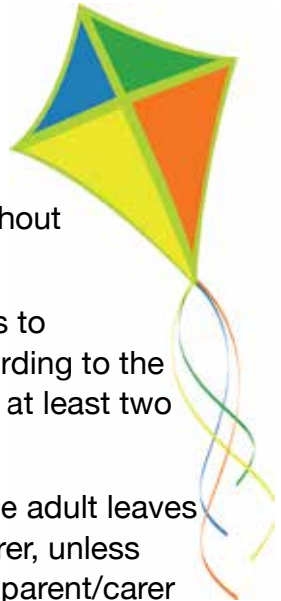
# Staff/volunteers/supervisors

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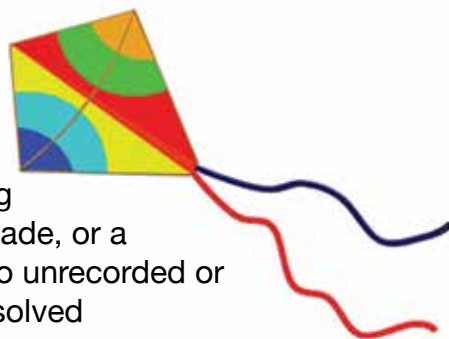
## when working with children, young people, vulnerable adults,

### You should

- **Keep to the role assigned to you by your organisation**
- Keep an attendance register
- Keep a record of untoward incidents and officially inform the parish of them
- Be supportive, approachable and reassuring
- Show respect, be patient and listen
- Respect the right to personal privacy
- Treat and value children, young people and vulnerable adults as individuals
- Show fairness, consistency and equality
- Offer support and empathy in a manner appropriate to age, state and gender
- Address and report any bullying incidents without delay
- Have an appropriate ratio of adult supervisors to children/vulnerable adults. This will vary according to the nature of the activity. There should always be at least two adult supervisors
- Ensure that no child, young person, vulnerable adult leaves the premises without an appropriate adult/carer, unless written permission has been obtained from a parent/carer



## You should not



- **Be alone with a child or young person**
- Let allegations that a child, young person or vulnerable adult has made, or a concern you have about them, go unrecorded or unreported, or leave issues unresolved
- Show favouritism
- Ask or promise to keep secrets
- Belittle or demean, shout at or argue with children, young people, vulnerable adults
- Embarrass, ignore or single out a child, young person, vulnerable adult
- Tolerate bullying
- Allow the unchallenged use of inappropriate language
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching, (kissing, hitting, smacking etc.)
- Make sexually suggestive comments – even if you think they are in jest
- Text/telephone/email a child, young person, vulnerable adult on a personal/social basis. Any electronic contact should only be to communicate official group information.
- Invite or accept invitations to join or engage with them on social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)
- Be under the influence of, or recovering from the effects of, alcohol or illegal substances
- Provide a child, young person, vulnerable adult with alcohol, tobacco, drugs or illegal substances under any circumstances

- Consume alcohol or tobacco while in their presence
- Leave children, young people, vulnerable adults unsupervised
- Use the toilets which children are using
- Allow a single child to go to the toilet block on their own. Children should go to the toilet block in pairs or groups or, where possible, accompanied by their own parent
- Take a child or young person in your car
- Take a child, young person, vulnerable adult to your home or other premises

## Photographs and Images

### You should:

- Ensure that any photograph/video/recording of a child, young person, vulnerable adult, even by mobile phone, is only ever taken by an officially designated person and with the prior written permission of parents/carers
- Ensure that any agreed photographs, videos, recordings are appropriate
- Use any such recordings only for the agreed purpose
- Report any inappropriate use of images
- Store any such images securely and delete them after the agreed use
- Report any inappropriate or dangerous behaviour on the internet that involves a child, young person, vulnerable adult

It is important that children, young people and vulnerable adults are made aware of the dangers associated with new technology, such as social networking sites and the internet, and that they know to tell someone if they encounter anything that makes them feel unsafe or threatened.

## Working with Vulnerable Adults

Most of the principles set out above apply to those engaged in activities with vulnerable adults. In addition, the following apply especially to vulnerable adults:

### You should not

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with a vulnerable adult, away from others
- Take a vulnerable adult alone on a car journey, unless this forms part of the organisation's official activities. If it is unavoidable, such transportation should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of the vulnerable adult's carer. If this is not possible, for example in an emergency, it should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of a leader or another volunteer, and an appropriate record should be maintained

### You should never

- Abuse, neglect, harm or place at risk of harm any vulnerable adult, whether by omission or commission
- Engage in rough physical games with vulnerable adults, including horseplay
- Engage in sexually provocative games with vulnerable adults
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a vulnerable adult
- Form inappropriate relationships with a vulnerable adult
- Gossip about personal details of vulnerable adults and/or their families
- Make/accept loans or gifts of money or valuables to/from vulnerable adults

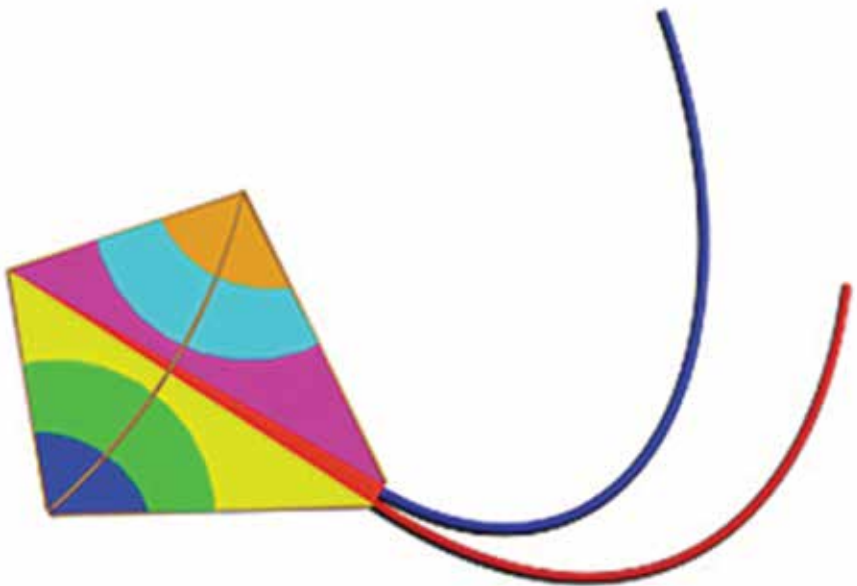
## Physical contact

You should ensure that

- Physical contact is person-centred and appropriate to the task required
- You understand and implement a vulnerable adult's care plan, where required
- Only designated and trained individuals assist with intimate care
- If you are concerned about anything during intimate care, you report it immediately

## Physical Restraint

The use of physical restraint is **not permitted**. However, there may be occasions where staff / volunteers have to make a judgement, based on the circumstances, in order to protect a child / vulnerable adult or other person. It is important to keep a record of any such incidents.

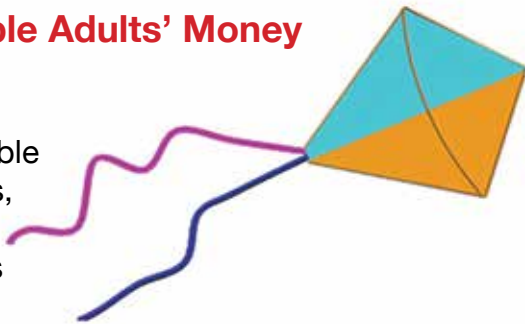




## The Handling of Vulnerable Adults' Money

### You should

- Maintain records of vulnerable adults' personal allowances, receipts and expenditure in line with your organisation's policy
- Never deny a vulnerable adult access to his/her money
- Never gain in any way when using a vulnerable adult's money on his/her behalf or guiding the vulnerable adult in the use of his/her money
- Never borrow or lend, accept or give money or valuables from/to a vulnerable adult
- Report any suspicions of financial abuse



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# Code for Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

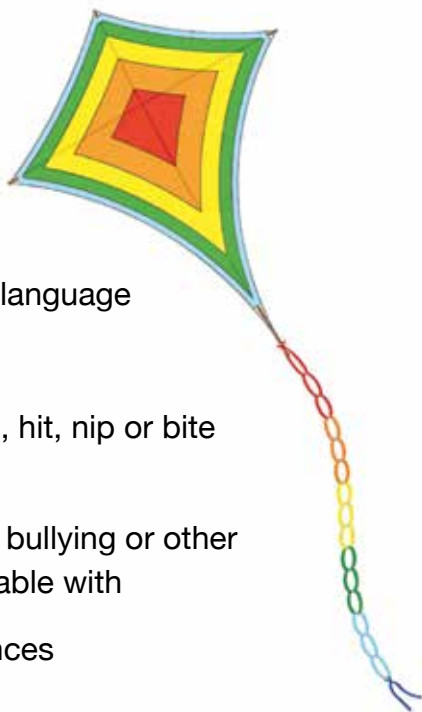
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Please

- **Do** respect other children and adults
- **Do** include other children or group members in activities
- **Do** ask questions if you are unsure about something
- **Do** use allocated toilet and changing facilities
- **Do** tell an adult straight away if you or another child, young person or vulnerable adult feels uncomfortable or frightened by the actions or words of another child or an adult
- **Do** follow safety guidelines and instructions

Please

- **Do not** make fun of others
- **Do not** swear or use inappropriate language
- **Do not** exclude others
- **Do not** be mean or fight, push, pull, hit, nip or bite others - even if you think it is in fun
- **Do not** promise to keep secret any bullying or other behaviour that you are not comfortable with
- **Do not** bring inappropriate substances to an activity/venue



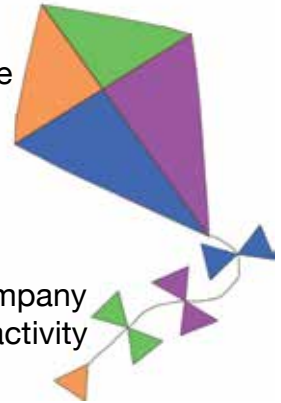
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# Parents' and Carers' Code

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## You should:

- Bring/collect your child, young person, vulnerable adult **punctually** to/from the activity venue
- Inform the leader of any information which could have an impact on the child's, young person's, vulnerable adult's participation in the activity
- Be alert to the possibility of danger and abuse
- Report any suspicions or allegations of bullying or abuse
- Show respect to others
- Take particular care in the car park and accompany your child / vulnerable adult to and from the activity venue



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## Health and Safety

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- It is the duty of all staff, leaders and volunteers to familiarise themselves with the Fire, Health and Safety regulations and practices for the particular building in which their activity is taking place.
- Do not leave items where they will cause an obstruction/hazard
- Children, young people and adults should not act dangerously, e.g. play on stairs/bannisters; run around in facilities, unless this forms part of the supervised activity

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# Concerns and Disclosures

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If you have any concern about a child or vulnerable adult, please report it to the group Leader, or, if you have a concern about the Leader or you are the Leader, please contact the Diocesan Designated Officer, or Social Services or the PSNI, whose contact details are below.

## Indicators could be

- sudden changes in behaviour
- physical signs
- worrying remarks made by the child, young person or vulnerable adult
- a situation where a child or vulnerable adult has been exposed to potential risk or harm

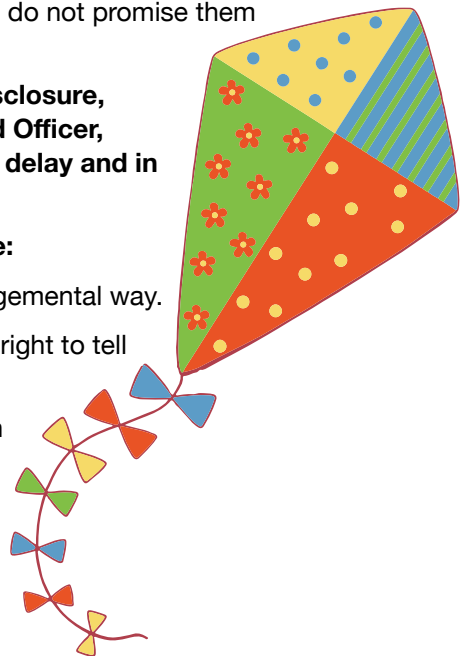
## Disclosures

A disclosure occurs when a child or vulnerable adult says that he or she has been, or is being, abused in some way. This could be physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect or bullying. Do not ask the child, young person, vulnerable adult any leading questions and do not promise them secrecy.

**If a child or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure, please contact the Diocesan Designated Officer, Social Services or/and the PSNI without delay and in confidence.**

**For disclosures, follow the 4R procedure:**

- **Receive** the information – in a non-judgemental way.
- **Reassure** the individual that they were right to tell you. Do not promise secrecy.
- **Record** the information – factually, with no value judgements or presumptions. Date and sign the record and keep it confidential.
- **Report** to the appropriate authorities (see next page)





## Reporting Contact Details

Organisation	Telephone	Ask for
<b>Social Services, Belfast (gateway number)</b>	<b>028 9050 7000</b> out of hours <b>028 9056 4444</b>	<b>The Duty Social Worker</b>
<b>The PSNI Public Protection Unit, Tennent Street</b>	<b>028 9025 9457</b> out of hours <b>028 9065 0222</b>	<b>The Child Protection Team</b>
<b>The Diocesan Safeguarding Office</b>	<b>028 9049 2783</b>	<b>The Designated Officer</b>

For more detailed information and advice on all safeguarding issues in the Diocese of Down and Connor, please visit:

**[www.downandconnor.org/safeguarding](http://www.downandconnor.org/safeguarding)**

You may, of course, consult any member of the Parish Safeguarding Committee, via the Parish Office.

**Tel: 028 9066 5409**

*This booklet was produced by  
the St Brigid's Parish Safeguarding Committee*



# St Brigid's Parish

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[www.stbrigidsparishbelfast.org](http://www.stbrigidsparishbelfast.org)