



Getting It Right

Standards of practice for
the protection of children
and young people



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

AN tDRI
Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí

MÁINNSTRÉ O
Poustie, Resydènter Heisin
an Fowk Siccar

Volunteer Now

Volunteer Now is a regional to local organisation which works to promote, enhance and support volunteering across Northern Ireland. Formed as a result of the merger of nine Volunteer Centres and the Volunteer Development Agency, the organisation works to enhance recognition for the contribution of volunteers, provide greater access to opportunities and increase the number of people getting involved.

Volunteer Now has worked on safeguarding issues since 1996 when it developed the Our Duty to Care (ODTC) project (funded by DHSSPS) to promote good child protection practice and provide support, information and training on standards for safeguarding within voluntary and community sector organisations across Northern Ireland. The good practice is outlined in the Our Duty to Care publication and in this document Getting it Right. Volunteer Now has more recently been funded to promote good safeguarding practice within voluntary, community and independent sector organisations working with vulnerable adults through the development of adult safeguarding standards and principles of practice and provision of training.

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Reasonable precautions have been taken to ensure information in this document is accurate. However, it is not intended to be legally comprehensive; it is designed to provide guidance in good faith without accepting liability. If relevant, we therefore recommend you take appropriate professional advice before taking any action on the matters covered herein.

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Foreword

Children and Young People are our most precious commodity. They represent the future of our community and our society, and that will only be safeguarded if they are loved, nurtured and cared for throughout their formative years. In the very early years, most of this is provided in the family context, but as they grow and spread their wings, the community as a whole plays a much greater part in their nurturing and development. Their growth is enriched by relationships with peers outside the family circle and by participation in a variety of community activities – sports clubs, art and drama groups, youth clubs and many more exciting experiences.

However, those experiences will only be enriching if they are provided in a safe environment and delivered by suitable people. It is therefore our responsibility to ensure that standards and guidance are in place for all organisations working with children and young people and that all organisations providing activities are aware of and implement those standards.

Getting it Right are the minimum standards of good practice for safeguarding children, recognised and endorsed by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Most organisations are adhering to these standards and many are exceeding them. However, we live in a fast

changing world where safe practice today may not be relevant tomorrow, as we have all experienced with the developments of new technology and the ‘virtual world’ that many young people inhabit. It is therefore essential that all organisations continually update and refresh their knowledge and for standards to be continually reviewed to reflect these changes.

I am therefore delighted to endorse this revised edition of Getting it Right that brings standards up to date and provides a tool for organisations to measure their practice against those standards. There is no guarantee that we can safeguard children and young people from all possible risk of harm but the application of good practice will ensure that risk is minimised while they enjoy a full and rich childhood.



Sean Holland

Chief Social Services Officer
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Introduction

As an organisation working with children/young people you will want to provide the best care for them, support your staff and volunteers through appropriate procedures and guidelines and reassure parents that your organisation is child centred.

Organisations who work with children have a legal and moral duty to ensure their safety. The most effective way to do this is to have well thought out policies and procedures in place. It is vital that all organisations, irrespective of size and sector (community, voluntary and statutory), develop child protection policies, procedures and guidelines to inform and promote good practice in their work with children.

Policies, procedures and guidelines increase peace of mind for everyone:

Children/young people

Ensuring that the welfare of children is treated as a priority, all children are treated equally and that their views are heard.

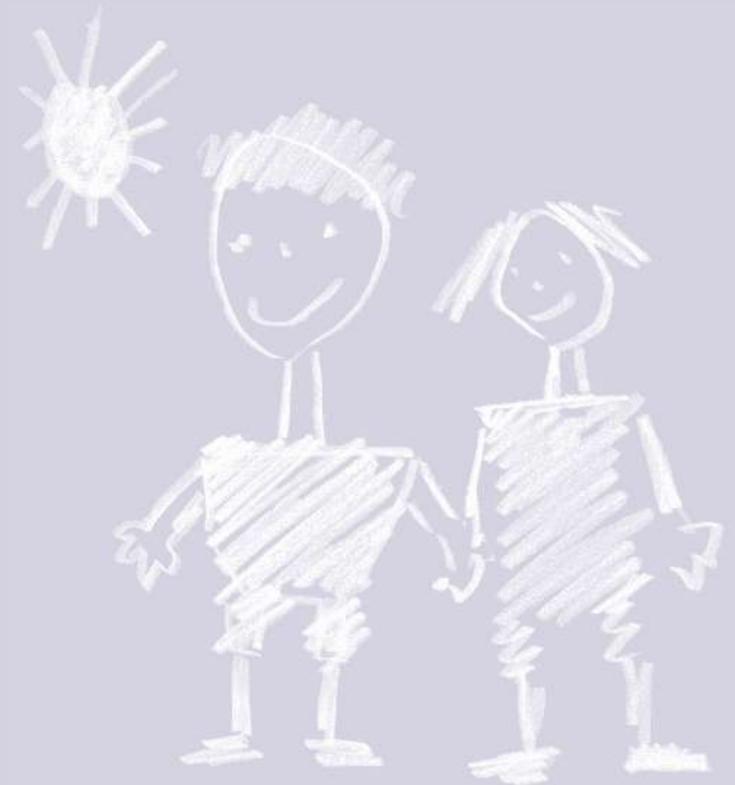
Parents

Reassuring parents that the organisation with which their child is involved views the child's welfare as paramount and welcomes parental participation.

Staff/volunteers

Giving staff and volunteers clear direction to give them confidence in what they do and to help protect them as well as the children in their care. The potential for abuse will be minimised and a positive atmosphere will be created, facilitating a rewarding and enjoyable experience for all concerned.

Each organisation's child protection policy must be relevant to the organisation and tailored to reflect the ethos, activities and structure of the organisation. To that end it is useful to consult within the organisation and involve as many people as possible in the development/review of the child protection policy.



How to Use This Guide

Getting it Right has been designed to meet the needs of organisations working with children and young people to develop appropriate policies and procedures to safeguard the children and young people in their care.

This booklet outlines the recognised minimum standards of practice expected of all organisations that provide supervised activities for children and young people. It is intended to help you to meet those standards and guide you towards improving your practice where necessary.

The format for each section of this booklet is as follows:

The standard

There are 7 minimum standards of practice.

The checklist

Key information on how to achieve that standard and the issues relevant to the standard which a child protection policy should address.

Supporting information

Further information to explain standard requirements.

Signposting

Reference to additional information to support the development of the standard of practice, including:

Our Duty to Care (ODTC) - www.volunteering-ni.org

As Good As They Give - www.volunteering-ni.org

AccessNI - www.accessni.gov.uk

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety - www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

Independent Safeguarding Authority – www.isa-gov.org

DIY Committee Guide - www.diycommitteeguide.org

Educational Visits Document - www.seelb.org.uk

Getting it Right should be read in conjunction with Our Duty to Care – Principles of Good Practice for the protection of children and young people. Our Duty to Care will support your organisation in building upon the minimum standards to produce the highest possible quality of care. These two documents are complementary in design and content to allow you to move easily between them.

Each section of Our Duty to Care mirrors a section in Getting it Right, supplementing the minimum standard with further details on good practice and safeguarding. Safeguarding is another term that is widely used to describe child protection practice.

Glossary of terms used in this document:

Child – throughout the document, when reference is made to child/children/young people, all children up to the age of 18 are included.

Parent – where reference is made to parent, carers are also included. It is assumed this is the person with parental responsibility for the child.

Parental responsibility – natural mother always has parental responsibility, natural father has parental responsibility:

- If married to mother at time of birth
- Or gains it through an agreement witnessed by a solicitor
- Through a Parental Responsibility Order
- Post 15 April 2002 if they jointly register the baby's birth
- Through re-registering the child's birth.

Developing a Child Protection Policy

What is a policy?

A policy is a governing principle of an organisation that requires all those connected with the organisation to provide a consistent response to a given situation.

A child protection policy should include your organisation's commitment to practice that protects children from harm.

It applies to everyone associated with your organisation and everyone should have a copy of it.

What is a procedure?

A procedure is a way of performing a task or conducting activities. Procedures are related to the implementation of a policy.

Procedures in this booklet relate to:

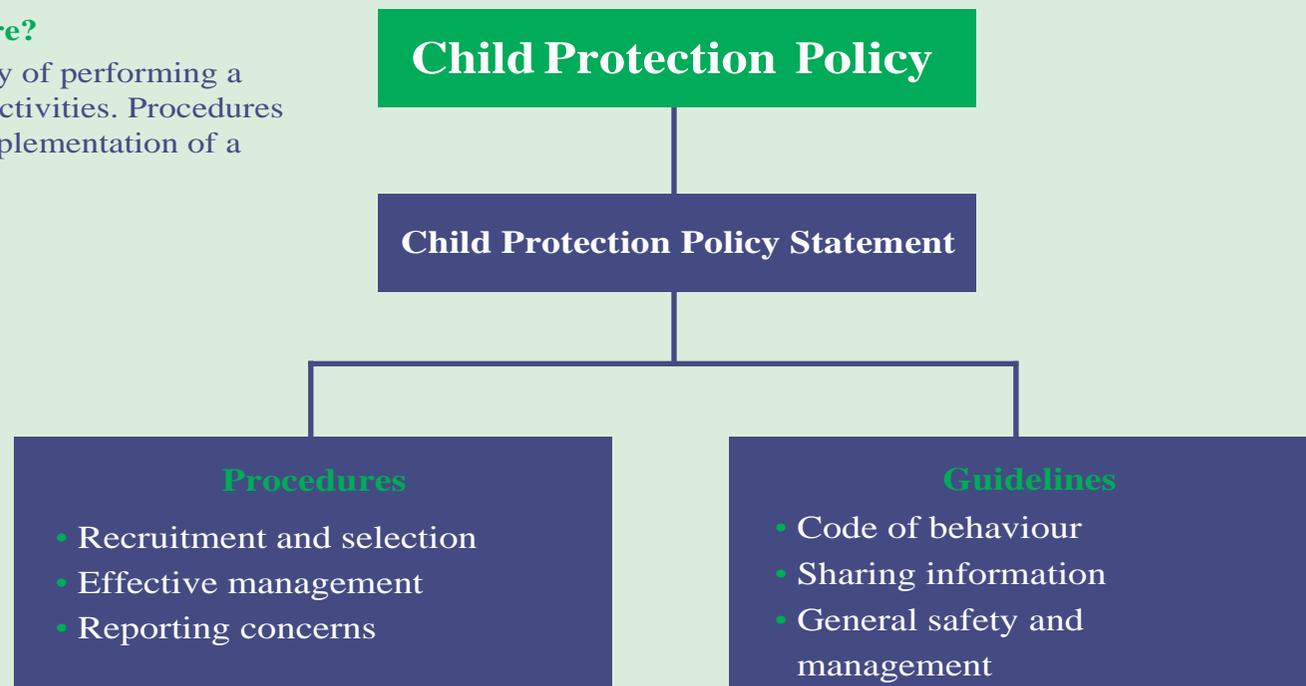
- Standard 2 – Recruitment and selection
- Standard 3 – Effective management
- Standard 4 – Reporting concerns

What are guidelines?

Guidelines are advice on how something should be done. Your organisation's child protection policy will contain guidelines on how the policy objectives should be upheld.

Guidelines in this booklet relate to:

- Standard 5 – Code of behaviour
- Standard 6 – Sharing information
- Standard 7 – General safety and management of activities



Standard 1 - There is a written policy on the organisation's commitment to safeguarding children

	Checklist	Supporting Evidence	Met?	If not met - what action needed? When? What? Where?	Attained Date
1	There is a statement of your intention to keep children safe from harm				
2	You refer to a (minimum 3 year) review of your policy				
3	There is an outline of the procedures you will take to meet this commitment in line with the minimum standard				
4	The person(s) with responsibility for approval of the policy are named				
5	The person(s) with responsibility for implementing and reviewing the policy are named				
6	All involved in the organisation are informed about the policy - children - parents - staff/volunteers - management committee				

Supporting Information

What should a policy statement contain?

In a policy statement, an organisation explains why it has a duty and responsibility to protect children and ensure that their welfare is paramount.

It then outlines how this will be done on a day-to-day basis (i.e. the practical steps that will be taken by adhering to the relevant procedures and guidelines).

How can it be used?

A policy statement applies to everyone involved with an organisation, including management committee members, managers and leaders, staff and volunteers, user groups, children and parents.

It should be prominently displayed – remember that it is a summary of the organisation's commitment to child protection.

Everyone involved with an organisation should receive or have access to a copy of the policy statement.

Useful hints for developing a policy statement

- A policy statement summarises the actions you will take to safeguard children
– keep it concise!
- Child protection procedures should be linked to each Getting it Right standard and suggestions for reviewing and updating the policy should be welcomed.
- Include the date when the policy was reviewed, who approved it and the proposed date for the next review. A child protection policy and related procedures should be reviewed at regular intervals, at least once every three years. It may also be reviewed before the proposed date in response to a change in, for example, legislation or organisational activities.
- Everyone in the organisation needs to have ownership of the policy and it must be tailored to the specifics of the organisation.

Signposting

ODTC Section 1 – Promote the general welfare, health and full development of children and protect them from harm of all kinds.

ODTC Appendix 5 – Sample Child Protection Policy Statement.

Standard 2 - The organisation consistently applies a thorough and clearly defined method of recruiting staff and volunteers

	Checklist	Supporting Evidence	Met?	If not met - what action needed? When? What? Where?	Attained Date
1	There is a clear job description for staff and role description for volunteers, and person specification outlining key skills and abilities required				
2	There is an open recruitment process				
3	There is an application form that covers past work/volunteering				
4	There is a declaration form requesting information on previous convictions				
5	There is an interview process suitable to the role and task				
6	Written references are sought (and followed up orally, when necessary)				
7	There is reference to regulated activity				
8	Consent is sought for AccessNI checks where appropriate				
9	The post has been approved by management				

Supporting Information

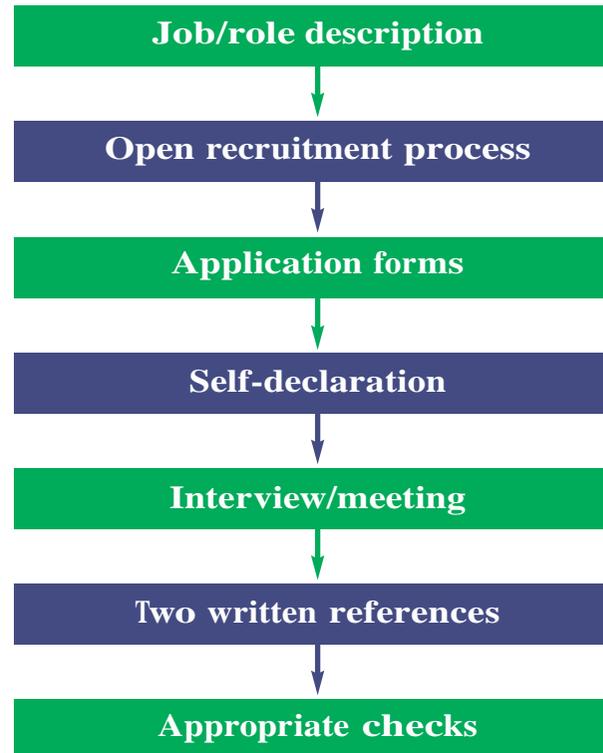
Whether you are recruiting staff or volunteers, it is important to have good recruitment and selection procedures to minimise the opportunity for unsuitable people to work or volunteer with children and young people. The majority of people who want to work with children are well motivated and without them voluntary and community organisations could not operate. Unfortunately some individuals will try to use voluntary and community organisations to gain inappropriate contact with children.

Good recruitment and selection procedures will help screen out and discourage those who are not suitable from joining your organisation.

You cannot assume that anyone is exempt from a recruitment and selection procedure.

Good recruitment and selection procedures benefit everyone. Staff and volunteers will have a clearly defined role. This will enhance their self-confidence, which will have a positive impact on children. Parents will be assured that all possible measures are being taken to ensure only suitable people will be recruited to work with children and children will be safer and protected.

Recruitment and selection procedures should be set out in writing in the child protection policy and include the following steps:



Your organisation's management/executive committee should approve all recommendations for appointment. The decision to appoint staff or volunteers is the responsibility of an organisation, not any one individual within it.

Appropriate Checks

Appropriate checks should be carried out on staff and volunteers working in regulated

activity with a child or vulnerable adult. This includes an Enhanced Disclosure Check, which can be applied for through Access NI.

Signposting

ODTC Section 2 – Develop Procedures to Consistently Apply a Thorough and Clearly Defined Method of Recruiting Staff and Volunteers

ODTC Appendix 6 – Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007

ODTC Appendix 7 - Access NI

ODTC Appendix 9 – Sample Volunteer Reference Form

ODTC Appendix 10 – Asking About Disability on Application Forms

ODTC Appendix 11 – Volunteers and Paid Staff - Definitions

ODTC Appendix 13 – Recruitment and Management of Workers

As Good As They Give (2) – Sample Volunteer Role Description

Access NI check – www.accessni.gov.uk

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 – www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

Standard 3 - There are procedures in place for the effective management, support, supervision and training of staff and volunteers

	Checklist	Supporting Evidence	Met?	If not met - what action needed? When? What? Where?	Attained Date
1	There is an induction process into: - organisational policies - their role				
2	There is a probationary period for staff and trial period for volunteers: - agreed timeframe - post is confirmed in writing				
3	There is training provided on: - particular skills (as appropriate) - child protection for all staff and volunteers (minimum of 4 hours)				
4	There is a procedure for supervision and support appropriate to the role				
5	There is an annual appraisal for staff and review for volunteers				

Supporting Information

Good management of staff and volunteers will contribute to safer activities for children and young people. It will also create an atmosphere where staff and volunteers feel valued, are listened to and where issues can be dealt with quickly by systems already in place.

Once staff and volunteers are recruited they should be informed about your organisation's policies, procedures and guidelines and be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision. This will minimise unintentional harm of children through lack of knowledge or skills and should pick up on possible intentional harm of children.

All staff and volunteers working directly with

children and/or young people should have child protection training that includes a basic awareness and understanding of child protection issues and the organisation's child protection policies, procedures and guidelines. Training must be carefully selected to ensure it is sufficient. For instance, a one hour training session is unlikely to be very useful. A minimum of four hours is required for basic awareness raising. Designated Officers and Management Committee members should access training appropriate to their role. You should develop and tailor procedures in line with your organisation's structure, ethos and activities. Effective management for staff and volunteers should include:



Signposting

ODTC Section 3 – Develop procedures for the effective management of staff and volunteers

ODTC Appendix 13 – Recruitment and Management of Workers

As Good As They Give (3) – Sample Volunteer Induction

As Good As They Give (3) – Sample Support and Supervision Planner

As Good As They Give (4) – Sample Training Needs Analysis Form

DIY Committee Guide - www.diycommitteeguide.org

Standard 4 - The organisation has simple and clearly defined procedures for dealing with actual or suspected incidents of abuse

	Checklist	Supporting Evidence	Met?	If not met - what action needed? When? What? Where?	Attained Date
1	There is a named Designated Officer(s) with a clearly defined role and responsibilities				
2	All staff and volunteers are informed of the name and contact details of the Designated Officer(s)				
3	The policy outlines the systems for recording child protection: - concerns - disclosures - allegations				
4	The policy outlines how to report child protection: - concerns - disclosures - allegations				
5	There is a procedure for dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers				
6	There is an outline of what is meant by confidentiality and its limitations				
7	There is an outline of the procedure for referral to the Independent Safeguarding Authority				
8	There is a system to communicate the reporting procedure to staff/volunteers				

Supporting Information

What do you need to do?

Reporting procedures inform staff and volunteers about what to do if they have to deal with a child protection concern or disclosure.

It is important to have appropriate procedures in place to facilitate staff and volunteers in reporting child protection concerns or disclosures should the need arise.

It is **not** your organisation's responsibility to identify and investigate possible instances of abuse of children. The agencies who have a statutory responsibility to deal with our concerns are Health and Social Care Trusts, PSNI and NSPCC. **It is** an organisation's responsibility to report any child protection concerns.

It is important that your organisation has procedures in place for dealing with child protection concerns, disclosures and allegations in order to support staff and volunteers, children and parents through the process of reporting. **Under no circumstances should any staff or volunteer attempt to deal with the problem of abuse alone.**

An allegation of child abuse may lead to a criminal investigation therefore you should not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation.

A procedure for reporting concerns should include guidance on:

- **Role of Designated Officer**

Every organisation should appoint a Designated Officer. It is the role of the Designated Officer to deal with issues of a child protection nature, offer advice to staff and volunteers and ensure procedures are being followed. Your organisation should appoint a Designated Officer who has completed child protection training and appointing a deputy is good practice if resources allow for it.

- **Recording and reporting systems**

All concerns, disclosures and allegations should be recorded on pro formas provided by your organisation and passed to the Designated Officer without delay. The following are examples only:

A concern may relate to the possibility of a child suffering harm.

A disclosure may be if a child tells a member of staff or volunteer that they have been or are being harmed or abused in some way.

An allegation may be a concern about the conduct of a member of staff or volunteer. The Designated Officer considers whether there is a child protection issue and deals with it appropriately, which may involve contacting and/or reporting to statutory agencies. Gateway Teams have been established to facilitate the referral process to Social Services.

- **Confidentiality**

Information should be shared with the appropriate person, on a need to know basis. In an emergency, staff and volunteers should contact statutory agencies if the Designated Officer is not available.

- **Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)**

If a member of staff/volunteer has harmed a child or placed a child at risk of harm, your organisation's internal disciplinary procedures should be followed and a referral made to the ISA.

Signposting

ODTC Section 4 – Develop Procedures for Responding to Alleged or Suspected Incidents of Abuse

ODTC Appendix 16 – Roles and Responsibility of a Designated Officer/Person within a Voluntary or Community Organisation

ODTC Appendix 17 – Reporting Procedures

ODTC Appendix 18 – Sharing Significant Information

ODTC Appendix 19 – Recording Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse

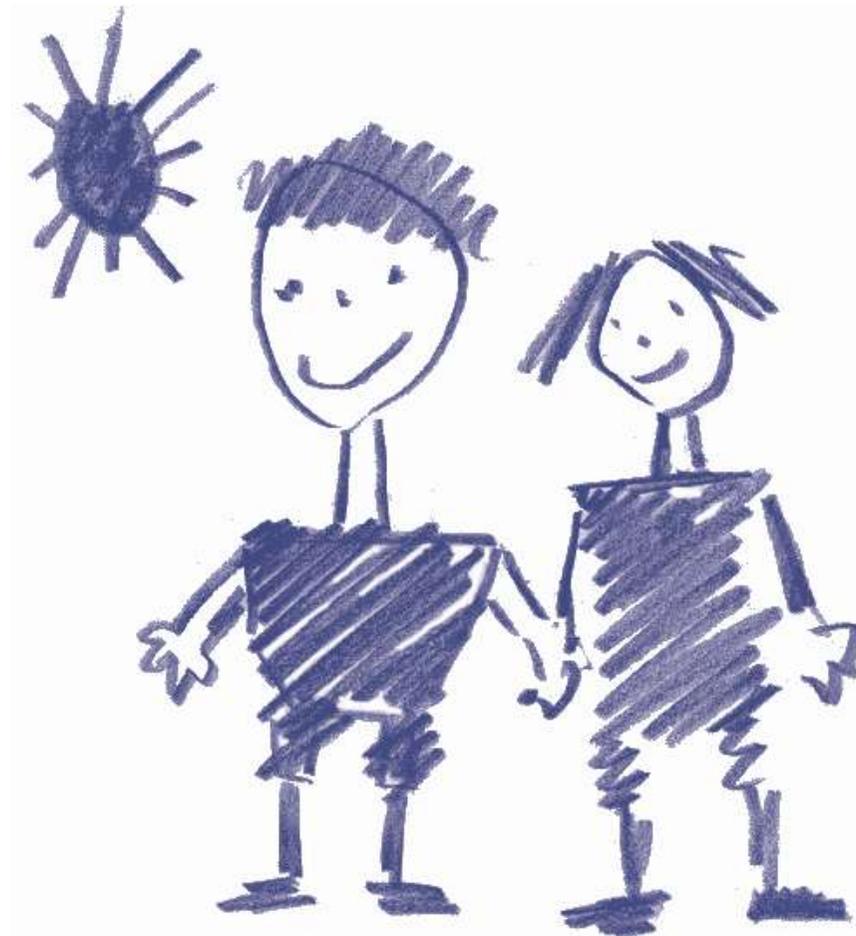
ODTC Appendix 20 – Reporting Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse

ODTC Appendix 21 – Allegations of Abuse against Staff and Volunteers

ODTC Appendix 26 – Incident Record Form

ODTC Appendix 31 – Useful Contacts

UNOCINI form – www.dhsspsni.gov.uk



Standard 5 - There is a written code of behaviour that outlines the behaviour expected of workers towards children and appropriate standards of behaviour expected of children and young people

	Checklist	Supporting Evidence	Met?	If not met - what action needed? When? What? Where?	Attained Date
1	The code of behaviour contains positive statements about how workers are expected to behave towards children				
2	The code of behaviour outlines behaviours to be avoided				
3	The code of behaviour outlines unacceptable behaviours				
4	The code of behaviour includes anti bullying guidelines				
5	The code of behaviour contains guidelines relating to physical contact				
6	The code of behaviour contains guidelines relating to diversity and additional needs				
7	The code of behaviour outlines sanctions for breach of the code of behaviour for staff/volunteers				
8	The code of behaviour is tailored to your activities				
9	There are guidelines on new technology and photography				

Supporting Information

A Code of Behaviour informs staff and volunteers in your organisation about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. It should provide information about what sanctions will be applied for non-compliance with the Code. A written Code of Behaviour should be prominently displayed, communicated to everyone associated with your organisation, and applied consistently.

Why do you need a Code of Behaviour?

A Code of Behaviour minimises the opportunity for children to suffer harm and seeks to protect staff and volunteers from false allegations. It will inform parents of the child-centred ethos of your organisation. It will ensure consistency of practice and promote the safety, protection, enjoyment and comfort of children.

When developing the Code of Behaviour, you should involve everyone (staff, volunteers and children, and parents where relevant) so that they all have an input into an agreed Code and take ownership of it.

A Code of Behaviour will give staff and volunteers the confidence to carry out their roles and develop positive relationships with children. It is an essential framework for interactions with children with regard to support and supervision, training needs and disciplinary actions.

What will it look like?

A Code of Behaviour should include positive examples of behaviours which will promote the safety and wellbeing of children as well as those behaviours that are unacceptable.

There are key areas that your organisation should consider as part of its Code of Behaviour, for which you will need to develop recommended practice. The list is not definitive and there may be other areas specific to your organisation that you need to include e.g. guidelines for creative arts, sport, day trips, young leaders and residential.

Signposting

ODTC Section 5 – Develop a Code of Behaviour to ensure the activities of the organisation promote the safety and well being of children

ODTC Appendix 4 – Self-protection – Kidscape

ODTC Appendix 12 – Code of Behaviour – Some Guidelines

ODTC Appendix 22 – Developing an Anti-bullying Policy

ODTC Appendix 23 – Using Mobile Phones and Emails – Guidelines for Leaders

ODTC Appendix 24 – Guidelines on Taking Photographs

ODTC Appendix 29 – Including Disabled Children

Standard 6 - The organisation has guidelines that outline how relevant information is shared appropriately with parents, children, workers and other relevant agencies

	Checklist	Supporting Evidence	Met?	If not met - what action needed? When? What? Where?	Attained Date
1	Appropriate records of children attending activities are kept confidentially				
2	Consent forms are sought for all activities from those with parental responsibility				
3	There are appropriate procedures in place for children/parents to share concerns				
4	Complaints procedures are communicated appropriately to children, parents and volunteers				
5	The policy outlines how information is shared with: - children - parents				
6	The policy informs staff/volunteers what and how written records should be kept				
7	There is a clear policy on confidentiality outlining what and how records are kept and how information is shared				
8	The policy informs staff of the grievance procedure				

Supporting Information

Good information sharing is essential in safeguarding children and young people. To ensure that children who use your organisation are safeguarded, a good communication system needs to be in place. Organisations should develop an ethos of working in partnership to engender feelings of mutual trust between parents, staff and volunteers.

Make sure that your organisation's written policy and procedures are available to all concerned and that they are clear about your complaints procedure and who any concerns should be shared with. Organisations should make every effort to communicate to all involved, taking account of language and communication needs.

Sharing information should include the following:

- **Written information sought from parents/guardians**

Basic details about children and young people should be sought, such as name, address, contact details for parents and any health or disability issues. Consent forms for all activities should also be sought from parents. It is essential to gain information in relation to consent for children to take part in activities that take place as part of normal routine as well as one off activities.

Information should also be obtained with regard to medical, dietary, additional needs and behavioural conditions as appropriate. Ensure that you inform parents/guardians that consent can only be provided by a person (a parent or carer) who has parental responsibility.

- **Confidentiality**

Your organisation needs to have a written policy about confidentiality, which states clearly why information is being shared and with whom.

Ensure that your confidentiality policy reflects the ethos of your organisation and makes reference to storage of and access to information, the length of time information is to be kept and sharing of information.

Let parents know that any information held about them will be held in accordance with data protection principles but that confidentiality has limitations.

- **Record keeping**

It is important that all staff and volunteers know and follow a written procedure for record keeping.

- **Complaints and grievances**

Everyone has a right to complain. Staff should do this through the grievance procedure and everyone else (including volunteers, parents and children) should use the complaints procedure.

Consideration needs to be given to how your organisation might help children express themselves when they are discontent. Written procedures should be in place and should encourage the swift dealing of complaints. Your organisation should also consider how to deal with appeals about decisions made in relation to complaints or grievances.

Signposting

ODTC Section 6 – Develop guidelines to ensure that relevant information is shared appropriately with parents, children, workers and other relevant agencies

ODTC Appendix 25 – Developing a complaints procedure

Standard 7 - The organisation has guidelines to ensure the general safety of activities, and to ensure the effective management of activities

	Checklist	Supporting Evidence	Met?	If not met - what action needed? When? What? Where?	Attained Date
1	All workers have, or have access to, a named or appointed first aid person for each activity				
2	There are procedures for recording: - accidents - incidents				
3	Transport is roadworthy and adequate for purpose				
4	There is adequate, appropriate and up to date insurance				
5	There are written procedures for dealing with emergencies				
6	There are regular fire drills and these are recorded				
7	There is an up to date list of emergency telephone numbers clearly displayed				
8	All workers are qualified and competent in their role				
9	There is a system for ensuring the safety of equipment				

10	There are clear ratios for supervision of children at various activities				
11	Risk assessments are carried out for all activities including day trips and/or residential				
12	Agreement on which organisation's procedures will be followed on a residential activity				
13	There are clear guidelines for sleeping arrangements for residential				

Supporting Information

General safety

To ensure the safety of children is paramount, your organisation should have written guidelines for the following:

- **First aid** - having or having access to a named/qualified first aider; stating the location of the first aid box.
- **Accidents and incidents** - these should be recorded on pro formas and guidelines developed for passing on information relating to accidents or incidents.
- **Transport** - any vehicles used should be roadworthy and adequate for the purpose. Drivers should be aware of the organisation's transport policy.
- **Insurance** - should be up to date and cover transport, activities and public liability.

- **Emergencies** - e.g. fire drills; up to date list of emergency telephone numbers.
- **Premises** - should meet health and safety guidelines e.g. heating and ventilation.

Management of activities

It is important to plan activities to ensure they are safely managed and take into account the nature of the activity and the age range and ability of participants. Your organisation should have written guidelines relating to:

- **Competency and qualification of leaders** - qualifications should be up to date and verifiable and leaders should only be supervising activities they are competent and/or trained to do so.

- **Safety of equipment** - equipment should be safe and used for the purpose for which it is intended.
- **Supervision ratios** - ratios should take into account the age, gender, nature of activity and the impact on supervision ratios of leaders being diverted away from group activities to deal with special needs that may arise.
- **Residential and day trips** - residential and day trips will encompass different activities than usually experienced in your organisation and it is important to prepare for this.

Signposting

ODTC Section 7 – Develop Guidelines to Ensure the General Safety and Management of Activities

ODTC Appendix 26 – Incident Record Form

ODTC Appendix 27 – Supervision of Children on Day Trips

ODTC Appendix 28 – Sample Health and Safety Checklist

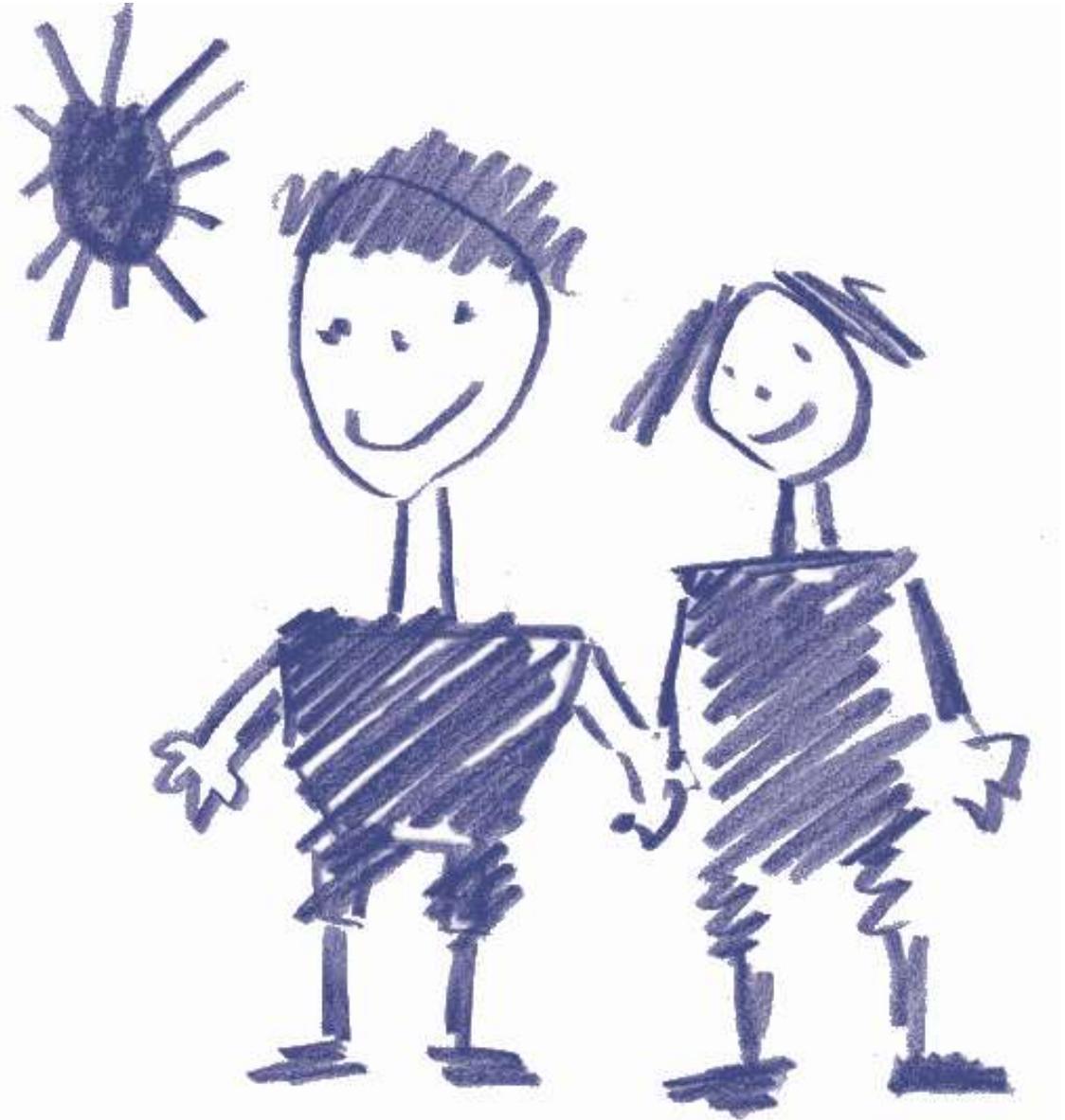
ODTC Appendix 29 – Including Disabled Children

ODTC Appendix 30 – Day Trip/Residential Planning Checklist

As Good As They Give (5) – Policy and insurance

As Good As They Give (5) – Assessing and Managing Risk

Educational Visits Document - www.seelb.org.uk





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