St. Gregorios Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church

Dublin, Rep. of Ireland.

(Under the holy see of Antioch and All the East)

(CRA # 20101367)

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

St. GREGORIOS JACOBITE SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, DUBLIN
(Service at: St. PAULS CHURCH, SMITHFIELD, ARRAN QUAY, DUBLIN 7)
E-mail: jacobitechurchdublin@gmail.com / Website: www.jacobitechurchdublin.com
www.facebook.com/jacobitechurchdublin

History:

Date	Approved by
04-10-2015 Version 1.0	Approved by the Executive Committee chaired by the Patriarchal Vicar of Ireland H.G Yuhanon Mor Milithios.
25-10-2015 Version 1.1	Approved by the General body chaired by the Vicar Rev. Fr Jobbymon Skaria.

Table of Contents

Our Policy 4
1. Introduction 4
2. General Conduct: 5
3. Respect for physical integrity: 5
4. Respect for privacy: 6
5. Meetings with children and young people: 6
6. Taking children and young people on outings: 6
7. Children with special needs or disability: 7
8. Vulnerable children: 7
9. Parental consent: 7
10. Health and Safety: 7
11. Record Keeping: 7
12. Parish Child Protection representative(s): 7
13. Complaints procedure: 8
14. Conclusion: 9
APPENDIX 10
Incident reporting form 11
Parental / Guardian consent form 12

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Our Policy

St. Gregorios Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church, Dublin recognize each of our children as a unique gift of God. We value, cherish, and actively encourage the participation of our children in our liturgies, and in all Parish activities that enhance their spiritual, emotional, physical, and social development.

The St. Gregorios Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church in Ireland does not tolerate any form of physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or any other form of Bullying in its premises or during any of its activities.

In accordance with this, we will work to do all in our power to create safe environments for our children who engage in such activities in order to secure their protection and enable their full participation in the life of the Parish.

1. Introduction

The St. Gregorios Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church, Dublin, Ireland has determined the implementation of up-to-date policies and procedures, which reflect best practice in the area of child protection.

Children and young people are an integral part of the church community. All of us within this community have a responsibility to uphold Gospel values by respecting the dignity and rights of all children and young people and to work together to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

This document details the principles to be observed in the Church to ensure the safety and protection of all our children and young people who participate in these Parish activities. It is emphasized that the guidance provided in this document is not exhaustive, and rather it offers a practical guide to those within the Church/Parish who work with children by outlining a number of fundamental principles of good practice.

This Code of Behavior will be implemented and followed in by all who are involved in church activities.

Church workers or Coordinators should familiarize themselves with this Code of Behavior.

THREE POINT PLAN FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS TO REMEMBER

A) ACCOMPANY your child in - DO NOT DROP AND GO

B) WAIT with your child until sufficient Adults are in place.

C) COLLECT your child from the activity.

2. General Conduct:

a) Physical punishment of children is not permissible under any circumstances.
b) Verbal abuse of children or telling jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children can never be acceptable. Great care should be taken if it is necessary to have a conversation regarding sexual matters with a child or young person.
c) Being alone with a child or young person is not always wise or appropriate practice. If a situation does arise where it is necessary to be alone with a child, another responsible adult should be informed immediately, by telephone, if necessary. A diary note that the meeting with the young person took place, including the reasons for it, should be made.
d) Best practice in relation to travel with children and young people should be observed. Personnel should not undertake any car or minibus journey alone with a child or young person. If in certain circumstances, only one adult is available there should be a minimum of two children or young people present for the entire journey. In the event of an emergency, where it is necessary to make a journey alone with a child, a record of this should be made and the child's parent or guardian should be informed as soon as possible.
e) Children or young people should not be permitted to work or remain in churches, parish property or schools unless there are at least two adults present.
f) All children and young people must be treated with equal respect; favoritism is not acceptable.
g) Personnel should not engage in or tolerate any Behavior, verbal, psychological or physical, that could be construed as bullying or abusive.
h) A disproportionate amount of time should not be spent with any particular child or group of children.
i) Under no circumstances should Church personnel give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children or young people.
j) Alcohol, tobacco or drugs must not be used by personnel while they are supervising of working with children or young people.
k) Only age-appropriate language, material or media products (camera phones, internet, and video) and activities should be used when working with children and young people. Sexually explicit or pornographic material is never acceptable.
l) Under no circumstances should volunteers use, provide or permit alcohol, tobacco or drugs when working with young people.
m) Garda Vetting applies to all persons working with children and or young people.

3. Respect for physical integrity:

a) The physical integrity of children and young people must be respected at all times.
b) Personnel must not engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind, including tough physical play, physical reprimand and horseplay (tickling, wrestling). This should not prevent appropriate contact in case of emergencies to ensure the safety of a child.

4. Respect for privacy:

a) The right to privacy of children and young people must be respected at all times.
b) Particular care regarding privacy must be taken when young people are in locations such as changing areas, swimming pools, showers and toilets.
c) Photographs of children or young people must never be taken while they are in changing areas (e.g., in a locker room or bathing facility).
d) Tasks of a personal nature (e.g. helping with toileting, washing or changing clothing) should not be done for children or young people if they can undertake these tasks themselves.

5. Meetings with children and young people:

a) If the pastoral care of a child or young person necessitates meeting alone with them, such meetings should not be held in an isolated environment. The times and designated locations for meetings should allow for transparency and accountability (ex, be held in rooms with a clear glass panel or window, in buildings where other people are present, and with the door of the room left open.
b) Both the length and the number of meetings should be limited.
c) Parents or guardians should be informed that the meeting(s) took place, except in circumstances where to do so might place the child in danger.
d) Visits to the home or private living quarters of church personnel should not be encouraged, nor should meetings be conducted in such locations.
e) When the need for a visit to the home of a child or young person arises, professional boundaries must be observed at all times.

6. Taking children and young people on outings:

It is good practice when organizing journeys/visits/trips to adhere to, or remember, the following:

a) The organizers of journeys/visits should plan and prepare a detailed programme of activities for the children who are involved in the project.
b) The organizers are responsible for the welfare and safety of the children for the whole time they are away from home.
c) There must be adequate, gender-appropriate, supervision for boys and girls.
d) Young people should not be left to their own.
e) All children should be adequately supervised and engaged in suitable activities at all times.
f) Each supervising adult should have a list of the children he/she will have charge of.
g) Parish Child Protection representative should obtain, in writing, parental consent to children joining an organized trip.
h) It is never appropriate to require someone aged less than 18 years to take on the role of leader or be in sole charge of children. Only adults should be in charge of any group of children.
i) Parents should be given full information about a trip, including details of the programme of events, the activities in which the children will be engaged and the supervision ratios.

7. Children with special needs or disability:

a) Children with special needs or disability may depend on adults more than other children for their care and safety, and so sensitivity and clear communication are particularly important.
b) Where it is necessary to carry out tasks of a personal nature for a child with special needs, this should be done with the full understanding and consent of parents or guardians.
c) In an emergency situation where this type of help is required, parents should be fully informed as soon as is reasonably possible.

8. Vulnerable children:

a) Since especially vulnerable children may depend on adults more than other children for their care and safety, sensitivity and clear communication are of utmost importance.
b) Church workers should be aware that vulnerable children may be more likely than other children to be bullied or subjected to other forms of abuse, and may also be less clear about physical and emotional boundaries.

9. Parental consent:

a) A signed consent form should be obtained from parents or guardians prior to the participation of children and young people in events, activities or groups or parents should be available at the premises during the event.
b) Parents should be asked to indicate if their children have any specific dietary requirements, medical needs or special needs, parents should be available at the premises during the event.

10. Health and Safety:

a) Ensure that buildings and/or facilities used for events and activities are suitable, safe and secure.
b) Make sure that fire precautions are in place and that fire extinguishers are checked regularly.
c) Make sure a first aid kit is readily available. This should be regularly checked and replenished as required.

11. Record Keeping:

a) An accurate record should be kept for each child and young person participating in activates, including, but not limited to attendance, programme details and medical information. This record should include a copy of the consent form or letter signed by the parent or guardian. It should also contain details of emergency contact numbers.

12. Parish Child Protection representative(s):

a) The church/parish will appoint a Parish Child Protection Representative(s) who will have the following responsibilities:

i) To promote awareness of the Church's child protection policies.
ii) To ensure that the public has ready access to contact details for Child Protection Team.
iii) To facilitate anyone in the parish in bringing an allegation or suspicion of child abuse to the attention of the Sunday School Teachers, Parish Representative, Parish Priest or The Diocesan Bishop, should they wish to have such support.

The Parish Child Protection Representative will be appointed by the parish after appropriate consultation and informed to the diocesan Bishop. The person appointed should have the personal qualities, interest and life experience fitting to the tasks involved. The Representative need not be a paid employee, nor a professional or expert and can be a clergy or lay person. He or she will be given a role specification, be required to undergo "Garda" Vetting process.

The Parish Child Protection Representative(s) are asked to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children. All are required to declare any past criminal convictions and cases pending against them. Such information will be dealt with in a confidential manner and will not be used to discriminate against applicants unfairly.

The name and contact details of the Parish Child Protection representative(s) should be made known to everyone in the parish.

A Parish Child Protection representative(s) should be selected or reselected every two years.

13. Complaints procedure:

Any complaint regarding child abuse taking place on parish property, in the course of parish activities or involving parish personnel, lay or clerical, should be reported to each of the following:

An Garda Síochána, Store Street, Tel: (01) 6668000 or Dial 999

Health Services Executive – Lo Call No - 1850 24 1850

Parish Child Protection Representative – The Vicar of the church

Parish Child Protection Team:

The Patriarchal Vicar -
Vicar -
Asst Vicar -
Parish Secretary -
Sunday School Headmaster -
Ladies representative to the Managing Committee -

a) If an allegation is made against by a member of the Parish Child Protection team or Parish Child Protection representative, their eligibility to be in the team will be automatically void until the complaint is dealt with.
b) If an allegation is made against a close relative of the Parish Child Protection team or Parish Child Protection Representative their eligibility to be in the team will be automatically void until the complaint is dealt with.

c) Complaints may be made by children, their parents or any member of the parish concerned about the welfare of our children.
d) Under no circumstances should any worker attempt to deal with the problem of abuse alone.
e) Confidentiality is key to this process. It must be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in concerns about child abuse. It is imperative that all information is treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know (Parish Child Protection Team and the appropriate person, i.e. the duty social worker or community child care manager in the local HSE Child and Family Services area). All written records should be filed securely.
f) CHILD PROSTITUTION or TRAFFICKING - Any concern or suspicion should be conveyed promptly to An Garda Síochána.

14. Conclusion:

This Code of Behavior is being issued to all adults who are involved with young people in our parish. It is to be available to all parishioners. The code is also available on the Parish Website. www.jacobitechurchdublin.com . This policy should be reviewed every three years.

APPENDIX

Responding to child abuse

Where child abuse is observed, intervene immediately and take steps to provide a safe environment for the child.

Remember, the safety and welfare of the child is of paramount importance. Report the misconduct to the person designated to receive complaints.

Where child abuse is suspected, concerns should be immediately brought to the attention of the person designated to receive complaints. The designated person will liaise appropriately with the statutory authorities.

Where child abuse is disclosed, either by the person directly affected or by a third party, the following provides general guidance as to tan immediate response:

Do:

• Listen carefully with sensitivity and openness

• Give a clear simple explanation of what will happen next.

• Reassure the complainant of your support.

• Record, date and sign an account of the meeting with the complainant.

• Report to the person designated to receive complaints.

Do not:

• Panic

• Ask leading questions.

• Promise to keep the disclosure secret.

• Ask the complainant to repeat the story unnecessarily.

• Make a judgment about the complaint.

• Start an investigation.

Incident reporting form

1. Name of child -

2. Date of birth -

3. Address -

4. Telephone -

5. Parent/guardian name -

6. Event/meeting and location -

7. Date of event/meeting -

8. Details of accident/incident -

……
……

9. Names of witnesses -

10. Action taken (details of first-aid, medical or police involvement)

……
…….

Signed Date

Position

Counter-signed Date

Signature of parent (if subject of report is a child)

A copy of the completed form should be provided to the Parish Child Protection Representative.

Parental / Guardian consent form

Name of Event / Activity:…….

Date/s of Event / Activity:…….

Type & Duration of Event (Day Event / Residential/ Pilgrimage) ……...

Name of

Participant:……...

Address:……..

Telephone:……..

Names & Addresses of Parents / Guardians

…… ……

…… ……

Daytime Phone No……. Daytime Phone No……

Mobile…… Mobile…….

If the young person in your care has any specific medical conditions or requirements, suffers from any allergies or has certain dietary requirements please state so here.

I am satisfied that I have been sufficiently informed about the activity to be undertaken.

I understand that the young person named above is being allowed to partake in the activity on the condition that all of the requirements of participation as have been outlined to me will be adhered to by him / her and that failure to do so could result in immediate withdrawal from the activity named above.

Signed – Parent / Guardian:……

Relationship to young person:……

Date:…….