

Dealing with accidents involving children

If a child has an accident and injures himself/herself while attending a Church-run event, these procedures should be followed:

1. Assess the injury and reassure the child. If the injury is severe or the child has lost consciousness, please contact the emergency services.
2. If the emergency services are called, contact with the child's parents/guardians must be made urgently. Contact information can be found on the Child and Guardian Joint Consent Form, 1.4A(3) & 1.4A(4).
3. If the parents/guardians are not available, it may be necessary for a leader to travel with the child to the hospital. If medical treatment is required, Church personnel may be asked about known allergies or existing medical conditions. Again, this information can be found on the *Child and Guardian Joint Consent Form*, 1.4A(3) & 1.4A(4).
4. If the injury is minor, local application of treatment should be available from the first-aid box. There should be a fully stocked first-aid box to hand at all Church-related events. Remember to make a note of what has been used from the first-aid box so that it can be replaced at the earliest opportunity. Under no circumstances should any medication be given to a child, unless under parental or medical supervision.
5. As soon as possible after the accident, write up a report using an *Accident/Incident Form* 1.4B(1) - available from the diocesan website. Once completed, this form should be stored in a safe place, in line with data protection, and treated as a confidential document.
6. Always inform parents/guardians of any accident that has occurred involving their child, regardless of how minor you consider it to be. It is good practice to give a copy of the *Accident/Incident Form*, 1.4B(1) to parents/guardians.
7. It is good practice to keep blank copies of the *Accident/Incident Form*, 1.4B(1) with the first-aid box so that one can be easily filled out in the event of an emergency.

Complaints procedure

A complaint is defined as a grievance and/or the raising of a concern about breaches of codes of conduct. Allegations or suspicions of child abuse do not fall into this category of general complaints.

All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and confidentially. Efforts will be made to quickly and informally resolve complaints through discussion with the parents/guardians, children/young people, volunteers/members of staff and clergy, as appropriate.

If a parent/guardian, young person or child is not satisfied with any aspect of the running of a particular activity, or the behaviour of any individual involved in that activity they should make a complaint. Initially, all complaints of this nature should be resolved using an open dialogue with the person responsible for the group or the Parish Priest. If resolution is not possible, the following step should be taken.

Steps to take:

1. Complete *Complaint Form*, 1.7A(1) and submit to the Parish Priest.
2. A letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint will be sent, enclosing a copy of the complaints procedure. All complaints must be thoroughly investigated.
3. The Parish Priest may organise a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve the complaint.
4. Following the meeting or discussion, the Parish Priest will write to the complainant to confirm what took place and to set out any solutions that were agreed upon.
5. If a meeting is not agreeable or possible, the Parish Priest will issue a detailed written reply to the complainant, setting out their suggestions for resolving the matter.
6. If the complainant is still not satisfied at this point, they should contact the Parish Priest again. At the conclusion of this step, the Bishop may decide to take further action on the complaint.

Whistle-blowing procedure

All staff and volunteers must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of their supervisor/superior/manager.

Reasons for reporting: 1) Each individual has a responsibility to raise concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour. 2) To prevent the problem worsening or widening. 3) To protect or reduce risks to others. 4) To prevent yourself from becoming implicated.

It is important to undertake the following steps:

1. Voice any concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as possible. The earlier a concern is expressed the sooner and easier action can be taken.
2. Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is of concern and why.
3. Approach your immediate superior/supervisor.
4. If your concern is about your immediate superior/supervisor, please contact your Parish Priest/Bishop/DLP/Statutory Services/NBSCCCI.
5. Make sure a satisfactory response is secured – don't let matters rest.
6. Ideally, concerns should be placed in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates, locations and any other relevant information.
7. You are not expected to prove the truth of your complaint, but you need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for concern.

Reporting allegations of abuse

The Diocese of Waterford & Lismore provides guidance and training on recognition of abuse, and clear procedures on what to do when a child protection concern arises, so that everyone knows how to respond appropriately.

If you want to report a suspicion, concern or allegation of abuse please contact our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for the Diocese of Waterford & Lismore on 087 966 1959.

The DLP will discuss the process of reporting with you.

If you are unsure about whether the concern meets the threshold for reporting it is important to talk it through with the DLP or the Deputy DLP. He or she will be able to inform you if the concern reaches the threshold for reporting.

Details of personnel to contact if you are concerned about the welfare and safety of children

Diocese of Waterford & Lismore

Designated Liaison Person - Fr. John Harris 087 9661959

Deputy Designated Liaison Person - Ms. Anne Walsh 087 2166789

Tusla, Child & Family Agency 051 842827

An Garda Síochána 051 305300
