



# **Child Safeguarding Policy**

Version – April 2024

The Boys' Brigade & Girls' Association  
Republic of Ireland Region

Unit C1 Nutgrove Office Park, Nutgrove Avenue,  
Rathfarnham, Dublin 14, D14 V5Y2

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## **Definitions**

<b>Child/Children</b>	For the purposes of this policy, a 'child' means anyone who is under 18 years of age. In Ireland, the Child Care Act (1991) defines a child as any person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or who has been married. However, from 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2019, the legal age requirement for marriage is 18 years and this is the case even if you marry outside of Ireland. It is no longer possible to get a Court Exemption Order allowing a marriage to proceed if one or both parties are under 18 years. Accordingly, anyone under the age of 18 is a child, with no exemptions anymore for marriage to take place.
<b>Children and Young People</b>	For the purposes of this policy, children and young people shall include all members of the Anchors, Juniors, Company and Senior Sections.
<b>BB</b>	Used throughout this policy as a synonym for <i>The Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association in the Republic of Ireland</i>
<b>Leader</b>	For the purposes of this policy, the term leader covers all volunteers within the BB regardless of rank or title.
<b>Employees</b>	For the purposes of this policy, the term includes the National Director and Regional Administrator employed by the BB.
<b>Regional Safeguarding Panel</b>	The Regional Safeguarding Panel is the title given to the designated liaison persons in the BB appointed to respond to child protection concerns and oversee the implementation of this policy on behalf of the Management Committee.
<b>Mandated Person</b>	As defined in the Children First Act 2015, mandated persons have a statutory obligation to report concerns which meet or exceed a particular threshold to Tusla and to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports, where requested to do so.
<b>Relevant Person</b>	As defined in the Children First Act 2015, 'means a person who is appointed by a provider of a relevant service to be the first point of contact in respect of the provider's Child Safeguarding Statement'
<b>Management Committee</b>	The Management Committee is the group responsible for the day to day running of The Boys' Brigade & Girls' Association in the Republic of Ireland.
<b>Regional Headquarters</b>	Unit C1 Nutgrove Office Park, Nutgrove Avenue, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14 D14 V5Y2
<b>Brigade Headquarters</b>	Felden Lodge, Felden, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP3 0BL
<b>Statutory Authorities</b>	These are Tusla (Child and Family Agency) which is the statutory body responsible for the safety and welfare of children and the Garda Síochána who are empowered under legislation to investigate these matters.

## **Declaration of Guiding Principles**

The Boys' Brigade & Girls' Association, as a Christian Youth Organisation is committed to providing a safe environment in which children and young people can develop socially, emotionally, spiritually and form positive relationships.

We provide the following activities to children and young people:

- Spiritual, Physical, Adventure, Community and Interest activities at company level
- Church services at company and district level
- Outings, holidays and trips away at company, district and regional level
- Inter-company competitions and events
- Training events at company, district and regional level

We believe that:

1. Our priority is to ensure the welfare and safety of every child and young person who attends our organisation is paramount.
2. Our guiding principles and procedures to safeguard children reflect national policy and legislation laid out in the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice 2018.
3. Our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures should be reviewed every two years or sooner if necessary due to organisational issues or changes in legislation or national policy.
4. All children and young people have an equal right to attend an organisation that respects them as individuals and encourages them to reach their full potential, regardless of their background.
5. We are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person who attends our organisation, including the rights to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to and heard.
6. Our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures apply to everyone in the organisation including management committee members, employees and leaders.
7. Employees and leaders must conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of our organisation.
8. We are committed to ensuring people's rights to confidentiality.
9. Our Child Safeguarding Policy covers all the BB activities at Company, District and Regional level within or outside the Republic of Ireland

The Designated Liaison Persons for The BB are

Olive Good  
Philip Daley  
Debbie Moore

The Management Committee should ensure that all other policies and procedures governing the activities of the BB comply with the procedures outlined in this policy.

## **Code of Conduct for Leaders and Employees**

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour the Boys' Brigade expects from all of our leaders and employees. The code aims to help us protect children and young people from harm and to reduce situations where misunderstandings, concerns or allegations may occur.

Leaders and employees are responsible for making sure they have read, understood, and agree to follow the code of conduct, and that they understand the consequences of unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour and poor practice.

### **The Role of Volunteer Leaders and Employees**

As a leader or employee in The Boys' Brigade, you have a responsibility to prioritise the welfare of children and young people and ensure that we provide an environment that is safe from harm.

In your role at The Boys' Brigade, you are acting in a position of authority and influence and have a duty of care towards the children and young people you work with. You will be seen as a role model and are expected to always act appropriately and recognise and report any behaviour that causes concern.

As a leader or employee in The Boys' Brigade YOU MUST:

- ensure in every respect that relationships formed with children and young people in your care are appropriate, and relevant to your role. Leaders and employees must ensure the relationships they form with children and young people are ALWAYS appropriate, healthy, safe and positive. Leaders and employees are in a position of trust and must ensure they maintain and demonstrate clear boundaries that are recognised by children, young people and leaders alike.
- treat all children, young people and adults fairly, respectfully and without prejudice or discrimination or favouritism. It is appropriate that the organisation focuses on children and young people, but it is also important that leaders and employees build and maintain positive relationships with fellow leaders, parents/carers and other adults in our communities. Leaders and employees should ensure that activities are accessible and inclusive.
- involve children & young people in the decisions that affect them wherever possible. It is important that children and young people are provided with opportunities to shape their programme and make decisions about their participation in activities. Leaders and employees should be aware of the needs and abilities of individual children and young people.
- always work in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations. Leaders and employees should always be aware of the environment they are working in and especially take this into consideration when planning activities including events and residentials, in settings they are not familiar with. Due consideration should also be given to the number of leaders and their responsibilities for supervising children and young people.
- create a safe environment ensuring all activities including weekly meetings, events, trips and residentials are risk assessed to maintain the safety of all involved by adhering to the safety practices outlined in this policy. Ensure proper supervision based on supervision ratios outlined in the Child Safeguarding Policy during ALL activities with young people including ensure that two leaders are present at the start and end of a session. A written risk assessment should be completed for all activities being undertaken. Regional Headquarters about any changes which may impact your suitability to be a leader or employee. Whether in a BB setting or your private life, if you become the subject of a criminal investigation or are subject to an enquiry by any child protection services, you must inform Regional Headquarters.

As a leader or employee in The Boys' Brigade YOU MUST NOT:

- allow concerns or allegations to go unreported
- develop inappropriate relationships with children and young people.
- allow or take any unnecessary risk which could put children and young people or adults at risk of harm.
- act in any way that is or can be perceived as threatening, intrusive or harmful, or patronises or belittles children and young people
- do not join in physical contact games or activities with children and young people, this will avoid unnecessary accidents, injuries, or inappropriate physical contact.

- engage in or permit abusive peer activities such as initiation ceremonies and bullying. Leaders should encourage children and young people to report any bullying.
- have any sexual contact with children or young people
- develop inappropriate physical, verbal, emotional or spiritual interaction with children & young people. If a leader or employee thinks that something they said or did may have inadvertently caused offence or upset, then they should try to address it in a sensitive way.
- make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory, or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people
- allow or arrange for any BB activities for children and young people to take place in your home or a private dwelling
- behave in any way that brings The Boys' Brigade into disrepute. Whilst it is not possible to be prescriptive of all the circumstances this could include, the organisation will consider the relevant circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

### **Code of Behaviour for Members**

A code of behaviour for members helps to explain children and young people's rights and responsibilities when taking part in a company's activities. For a code of behaviour to work best, children and young people need to be able to develop the code for themselves, with the assistance of leaders.

Codes of behaviour have been shown to help children and young people to develop their sense of fair play and mutual respect and will help to create a safe, secure environment and an atmosphere where children and young people will feel that they can confide in the leaders. When children and young people 'own' the code, they will generally protect and support it.

It is recommended that at the start of each section's year a code of behaviour be drawn up with the members' participation. While it is recognised that discipline may seem at times to be restrictive to children and young people it is best enforced with their agreement and therefore the members should also be involved with deciding what sanctions should be associated with the code of behaviour.

An effective code of behaviour should contain the following elements:

- A description of the rights and responsibilities of all members of the group (i.e. respecting views and feelings of other members, right to express opinions, right to be heard/listened to)
- A description of the ways in which the group encourages and recognises good behaviour (i.e. reward system)
- A description of unacceptable/inappropriate behaviour (i.e. verbal abuse, physical abuse, destruction or damage of property or equipment, alcohol consumption, smoking, misuse of any substance)
- A description of what is acceptable in terms of use of mobile phones at activities
- Mechanisms for achieving a supportive culture and positive environment (i.e. leaders willing to listen to children and young people, involvement of children and young people in decision making)
- Strategies to embrace diversity and difference within the group (i.e. respecting others' opinions, not excluding anyone)
- Strategies for the prevention of bullying and other serious misbehaviour and process for managing conflict (see Anti-Bullying policy)

In responding to challenging behaviour, the response should always be proportionate to the actions, be imposed as soon as is practicable and be fully explained to the child/young person and their parents/carers. When dealing with a disruptive child/young person, it is recommended that, where possible, more than one leader be present.

When discussing sanctions with the children and young people as part of the code of behaviour, leaders could suggest the following options:

- Time out – from the activity, group or individual work
- Reparation – the act or process of making amends

- Restitution – the act of giving something back
- Reinforcement – rewards for good behaviour, consequences for negative behaviour
- De-escalation of the situation – talking through with the young person
- Increased supervision by leaders
- Use of individual 'contracts' or agreements for their future or continued participation
- Sanctions or consequences, e.g. missing an outing
- Seeking additional/specialist support through working in partnership with other agencies to ensure a child/young person's needs are met appropriately e.g. family support agencies.
- Temporary or permanent exclusion.

The following should never be permitted as a means of managing a child/young person's behaviour:

- Physical punishment or the threat of such
- Refusal to speak with or interact with the child/young person
- Being deprived of food, water, access to toilets or other essential facilities
- Verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation.

Once the Code of Behaviour and sanctions have been agreed by the members of the section, a copy of it should be issued to each child and young person and their parents/guardians for them to sign.

## **Breaches of Code of Conduct**

Leaders and employees must always follow the Code of Conduct and never rely on their reputation or that of The Boys' Brigade to protect them.

### **Disciplinary procedures if a leader is found in breach of Code of Conduct**

If a leader is the subject of a complaint due to an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct the matter will be investigated in line with the Complaints procedure.

In the event of a complaint being upheld, the following actions will be available to the Brigade. [This list is non-exhaustive.]

- A written warning may be issued to the Leader involved.
- The Leader will be required to undertake appropriate training and development within an agreed timescale.
- Certain restrictions may be placed on the Leader's registration – e.g. not to attend residentials etc
- The Leader's registration may be suspended for a given period.
- The Leader's appointment may be withdrawn.
- The outcome of a complaint will be referred to in dealing with subsequent complaints.

If there is a child protection or welfare concern or allegation of abuse is raised about a leader, the Management Committee will follow the procedure laid out in this policy for dealing with an allegation and may suspend the leader until such time as the investigation has been completed and the Management Committee will then determine the position of the leader in the BB subject to the findings of the investigation.

### **Disciplinary procedures if an employee is found in breach of Code of Conduct**

If an employee is the subject of a complaint due to an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct the matter will be investigated in line with the Complaints Procedure and where the complaint is upheld the employee will be subject to disciplinary measures as outlined in the Staff Handbook.

If there is a child protection or welfare concern or allegation of abuse raised about an employee, the Management Committee will follow the procedure laid out in this policy for dealing with an allegation and may suspend the employee until such time as the investigation has been completed and the Management Committee will then determine the position of the employee in the BB subject to the findings of the investigation in line with the agreed disciplinary procedures outlined in the Staff Handbook.

## **Recruitment of Leaders**

The BB has specific regulations and requirements for all adults working in the name of the BB including leaders working in Companies, those with responsibilities in Districts, including Office Bearers and Reserve Officers, and those working at Regional level.

Individuals who wish to become leaders in the BB are interviewed and nominated by the Chaplain and Captain of the Company and complete the Leader Registration Form and a Vetting Invitation Form (both available from Regional Headquarters and the BB website [www.boysbrigade.org](http://www.boysbrigade.org)).

The completed Leader Registration Form, Vetting Invitation Form, documents verifying identity and current address (signed by the Company Captain/Correspondent) are sent to the Regional Headquarters. On receipt of the documentation from the Company, Regional Headquarters, will transfer the information from the Vetting Invitation Form onto the NYCI Vetting Request form and email it to NYCI's Youth Work Vetting Consortium Liaison Persons. The NYCI's Liaison person will create a vetting application and send an email to the individual applying to be a leader requesting them to complete the E-Vetting application on-line. Once this on-line application has been completed by the individual, the NYCI Liaison Person will review it, and if in order, submit it to the National Vetting Bureau. Once vetting has been completed the National Vetting Bureau will notify the NYCI Liaison Person that a vetting disclosure is available. The NYCI Liaison person will access the vetting disclosure and forward it to Regional Headquarters.

On receipt of the Leader Registration Form, this will be forwarded to Brigade HQ where the potential leader will be added to OBM as pending registration and provided access to the online training modules. These online training modules may be completed whilst the vetting and reference checks are being undertaken.

Regional Headquarters will require individuals who have immigrated to Ireland or have resided overseas for a long period to complete a sworn declaration (Declaration by a leader or employee from Abroad – See Appendices) that there is nothing in their background which would prevent them from working with children and young people.

Regional Headquarters will also write to the referees provided on the Leader Registration Form seeking completion of a Volunteer Reference Form for the individual wishing to become a leader. Consideration will be given to the information contained on the vetting disclosure and references received and if all is satisfactory, names of suitable leaders will be forwarded to the Management Committee for ratification of their appointment. The Regional Administrator will update OBM in relation to the completed vetting and reference check, the leader will be registered, allocated a registration number, and sent a leader registration card. The Captain of the Company will be informed that the leader can now commence working with children and young people in the company. It is the responsibility of the Company Captain to ensure that all new leaders are provided with an induction into the company and ongoing supervision and support.

If there is information on the vetting disclosure or references that indicates that the individual should not be appointed, Regional Headquarters will inform them in writing, giving reasons. An individual who is deemed unsuitable to work with children and young people has the right of appeal. The appeal should be made in writing to the Regional Safeguarding Panel.

In the case of a vetting disclosure that contains information that makes it unclear whether or not an individual should be registered, then a referral to the Regional Safeguarding Panel will be made. Members of the panel will consider the suitability of the individual and conduct a risk assessment based on whether the nature of the information on the disclosure poses any risk to the welfare of children and young people or other adults. If the panel agree that the applicant is suitable to work with children and young people their name will be forwarded to the Management Committee for ratification of their appointment, then Regional Headquarters will register the individual. In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for an individual to be registered for a probationary period, with a date set for review. It may also be the case that an individual could be registered with certain conditions attached (for example that they do not drive the minibus etc.). An individual who is still deemed unsuitable by the panel has



the right of appeal. The appeal should be made in writing to the Chair of the Management Committee within three months of notification of unsuitability.

### **Leaders under 18 years of age**

The BB seeks to develop and empower children and young people and part of that empowerment process is to encourage teenagers to take responsibility for a range of roles within the Company or Section. Giving responsibility to a teenager for a group of younger children can have immense benefits for all involved and offer opportunities to learn and develop new skills.

It is important that proper support and information is sought from and provided to a teenager taking on this young leadership role.

Teenagers who wish to become young leaders in the BB should complete the Young Leader Application Form which is available from Regional Headquarters. Where that teenager is aged 16 - 17 years of age, they should complete a Vetting Invitation Form and forward both forms to Regional Headquarters along with a Parental Consent form for Garda vetting completed by the teenager's parents. Once Garda Vetting has been completed satisfactorily, the names of suitable young leaders will be forwarded to the Management Committee for ratification of their appointment. Following this Regional Headquarters will register them as a young leader. The Captain shall be informed that the person can commence working with a younger age group. The Captain shall ensure that the young leader is provided any necessary induction and ongoing supervision within the company.

Young leaders shall work in partnership with or under the supervision of an adult leader and never be left in sole charge of any group. Young leaders shall be provided with the necessary information to allow them to work safely within the Company/Section. Young leaders should never be counted in the leader numbers for supervision ratios for activities as they are still under 18.

When a young leader reaches the age of 18 and wishes to continue to work in a Company, they must complete the rest of the recruitment process to become a leader.

Age appropriate Child Protection training will be provided at a level suitable to leaders under the age of 18.

### **Re-Vetting of Leaders**

It shall be the policy of the BB that all staff and leaders will be subject to re-vetting every three years.

## **Training of Leaders**

All new leaders, on the first time of starting work within a Company should receive induction from the Company Captain, or delegated person. This induction will include emergency procedures and an explanation of the Child Safeguarding Policy. The new leaders will be issued the leaders card and emailed a copy of the Child Safeguarding Policy.

Potential leaders will be asked to complete the Safeguarding training (ROI) module contained on OBM prior to the completion of their registration as a leader.

The BB encourages all leaders to attend Youth Leader Training as soon as is practical. It is mandatory that all leaders undertake the Child Safeguarding training module by the end of the first full session following their appointment as a leader. At the training, leaders will be asked to complete a Declaration of Acceptance stating that they will follow the procedures laid out in the Safeguarding Policy and exercise a duty of care to the children and young people in their charge. New leaders will also be encouraged to complete the Tusla e-learning module to complement the Child Safeguarding training provided by the BB.

Employees and leaders who hold a role at Regional level will be required to complete the Tusla e-learning module within three months of their appointment.

All leaders should attend a Child Safeguarding training every three years.

Training will be provided by the Regional Training Team in each District and it is the Captain's responsibility to ensure that the appropriate training is attended by all leaders.

It is also the Captain's responsibility to ensure that any young leaders in the Company are protected by the same standards of care as other children and young people and that they attend appropriate training.

Regional Headquarters will keep a record of all Child Safeguarding training attended by leaders and employees.

### **Ongoing support and supervision**

Leaders should be supervised by the Company Captain/Correspondent and be involved in regular leaders' meetings.

Support will be provided to all leaders in the organisation by Regional Headquarters staff and the Management Committee.

## **Safe Working Practices**

The Boys' Brigade provides children and young people with opportunities to learn, grow and discover in a safe, fun, and caring environment which is rooted in the Christian faith. It is not realistic to expect that a totally accident-free environment can be achieved, but by increasing the awareness of safety issues we can create the safest possible experiences for children and young people.

Keeping everyone safe is everyone's responsibility, creating a culture of managing risk within The Boys' Brigade will help us to do this. It is important that we consider safety and managing risk as part of everything we do and not just when we think something is high risk. Although the Company Captain/Correspondent and Leaders in Charge of Age Groups have specific roles to play in ensuring the safety of everyone, every leader has a part to play in building and maintaining a safe space.

### **General Safety**

- Leaders should be aware of any health issues, including allergies concerning individuals which might have implications for participation in certain activities.
- All leaders should be fully aware of the location of emergency exits and assembly areas to be used in the event of an emergency evacuation of the premises when necessary, including name checks to ascertain all are safely evacuated. All children and young people should be aware of the evacuation procedures through regular emergency drills. Leaders should be aware of the location of fire alarms, extinguishers and First Aid box. In the event of a fire, evacuating the building and saving life is much more important than fighting a fire.
- All emergency exits should be kept permanently clear of any obstructions. It is the responsibility of the Leader-in-Charge of the event to see that this requirement is met on an event-to-event basis.
- All leaders should have ready access to the properly maintained First Aid Kit and should have appropriate basic knowledge in its use. The First Aid kit should be checked and updated every six months.
- Leaders should know where the nearest telephone is located and not rely on mobile phones.
- On an annual basis, the Company Captain and leaders should satisfy themselves that the premises in which the Company customarily operates, and the resources to be used, are safe for the activities of the Company. This annual risk assessment must not be taken lightly. In addition to the annual risk assessment, leaders should always have a quick initial look around the premises you are about to use to identify any possible risks e.g. a stack of chairs which could topple, an electric cable which could trip, etc.
- Where BB activities are the only activity taking place in a premises the front door should be kept locked with a relevant internal easy opening device so that access is limited to those attending and the leaders of that group. If parents/guardians wish to gain access to the premises during BB activities, they should have to ring a door bell or use an intercom and a leader should open the door to allow them access to the premises.

- Where BB activities are taking place at the same time as other activities are taking place, leaders should be aware of the other groups using the premises and the potential threats that this may raise. This may involve having extra leaders in place for BB activities to monitor the door to the premises and supervise bathroom facilities.
- It is essential at the end of BB activities that children and young people are handed over to the parents/guardians or the adult authorised to collect the children by a leader. Where a parent wishes their child (Company or Senior Section) to travel home from a weekly meeting or other BB activity on their own, they should make the leaders of that section aware of that in writing.
- While in a kitchen area children and young people must be supervised by all times by a leader or if children and young people are not allowed in a kitchen area, it should be clearly marked as out of bounds to children and young people.
- During games and physical activities be aware of the risks of physical injury and guard against these.
- Check that equipment is safe and do not use items that a leader believes are not fit for the purpose.
- A plan for dealing with emergency situations should be drawn up for each section. This would include actions to be taken, records kept and local contact numbers for those who need to be informed.

### **Administration**

Leaders must ensure that all children and young people joining their BB company have a joining form completed by a parent/guardian giving personal details of the child, contact details for parents/guardians and parental consent to participate in BB activities. Details of children and young people who join a BB company should be uploaded to Online Brigade Manager (OBM) by the leaders.

Leaders must ensure that all children and young people have an annual information form completed by a parent/guardian to ensure that the data held by the company and on OBM is correct at any given time.

Parental consent for all activity and events outside of BB weekly meetings should be completed by a parent/guardian in advance of the activity.

It is essential that written information sought from parents/guardians is provided by those with parental responsibility.

Parents/guardians should always be informed of the limits of confidentiality around their contact details and any information they provide to the organisation.

An attendance register (either on paper or on OBM) should be kept for each individual BB activity (weekly meeting or other activity) and include all children and young people, leaders and any other adults present.

Accidents and incidents should be recorded on the accident/incident report forms/books.

### **Supervision Ratios**

Leaders should ensure that there is sufficient help available for activities to be organised in a way which maximises fun, learning, safety, and participation.

The minimum adult/child ratio in any group should be one adult per group of eight plus one other adult and allowing an additional adult for each group of eight thereafter. Local circumstances, the ages of the children, and the experience of the leaders should be taken into consideration. Safety, ability/disability of children and the nature of the activities being undertaken may require that the 8:1 ratio be lowered considerably.

Number of Children	Number of Leaders
0 – 8	2
9 – 16	3
17 – 24	4
25 – 32	5

Where BB activities involve children of mixed gender, it is recommended that there are sufficient adults of both sexes to properly supervise activities and any premises in use.

In order to ensure the safety of children on activities (particularly outings or trips away), it is permissible to utilise parents of the members to assist with supervision ratios to ensure that an adequate level of supervision is being provided. This is permissible under the occasional clause in the Vetting legislation for once-off occasions. However, if it is necessary to utilise parents to ensure adequate supervision ratios for the members on a weekly basis, these parents should undergo the complete recruitment process outlined on page 8.

Where a BB company is allowing young people who are under 18 to act as 'young leaders', this should be about developing a young person's sense of belonging and responsibility, rather than depending on them to take full responsibility for managing a group of children. Young leaders under 18 can supplement the numbers of adult leaders supervising an activity but should not be counted as part of the core ratio.

It is always important to remember to plan ahead for the possibility that a leader may be unable to attend a BB activity at short notice.

Situations may arise in a reactive situation where a child or young person requests to speak to a leader privately without warning or where a child or young person needs to be removed from a group.

If a leader needs to talk to a child or young person alone, they should try to do so in an open environment, in view of others. If this is not possible try to meet in rooms with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room/area where other people are nearby.

Leaders should advise another leader that such a meeting is taking place and the reason for it. A record should be kept of these meetings including, name, dates, times, location, reason for the meeting and outcome and the report provided to the Company Captain.

If in exceptional circumstances a situation arises unexpectedly where a leader is left alone with a child or young person, steps should be taken to remedy the situation promptly. The leader must ensure the circumstances are reported to the Company Captain, the relevant parents and are documented.

Leaders are strongly advised against meeting with individual children or young people where they are on their own in a building.

### **Risk Assessment**

Children and young people derive a great deal of benefit from their time in the BB and the wide variety of opportunities that are available to them from the sectional meeting night and taking part in visits, holidays and activities as part of their BB programme.

Most activities take place without incident and it is clear that BB leaders are already demonstrating a high level of safety awareness. Potential hazards should not discourage leaders from organising trips and holidays; these present opportunities for experiences that are not available on a sectional meeting night. No amount of planning can guarantee that a sectional meeting or a trip or holiday will be totally

incident free, but good planning and attention to safety measures can reduce the number of accidents and lessen the seriousness of those that do happen.

Conducting a risk assessment as part of programme planning should enable leaders to ensure that situations and activities where children and young people or leaders could be faced with danger are identified and risk assessed accordingly, and appropriate controls are implemented. Risk assessments are dynamic and ongoing and regular reviews of the controls should be carried out.

In general there are five steps of risk assessment:

- 1 Identify hazards. A hazard is anything that can cause harm. A risk is the chance, high or low, that someone will be harmed by that hazard. Engage with children and young people and leaders to identify who or what might cause harm to children and young people at BB activities. Everyone offers different insights into what is a risk.
- 2 Identify people who might be harmed and how. Think about groups of people who might be at risk and in what way they may be harmed.
- 3 Analyse risk. When all significant hazards have been identified, consider how likely it is that each hazard could cause harm and determine the likelihood and severity of the risk.
- 4 Implement plan. Identify actions that need to be completed, identify the person responsible for completing them, and by when. Ensure ongoing plans are in place and are being implemented to respond to any risk identified.
- 5 Review. When reviewing the process, leaders need to consider does it work? Has it been effective? Is it up to date. Circumstances can change and the risk assessment may need to be updated. Risk assessments should be completed at least annually.

All risk assessments should be recorded in written form.

#### Meeting night premises

The leaders should undertake an annual risk assessment of the premises or parts of the premises that the Company uses for its meeting nights. The owners of the premises should already be undertaking a full annual assessment. The leaders should confine the assessment to those parts of the building used and to the sectional programmes. A simple form for this purpose is available from Regional Headquarters (included in the appendices). This may be delegated to an appropriate person but it is the Captain's responsibility to ensure that it is undertaken and that matters of concern that cannot be addressed by the leaders are brought to the attention of the church or the owners of the premises.

Assessments should have the aim of preventing the risk or reducing them. Children and young people and leaders must not be put into situations that expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. Safety must always be the prime consideration. The ongoing safety of the Company should be addressed as matters arise.

#### Visits, holidays and activities

The requirements for holidays and camps along with the regulations and notification requirements for camps, holidays and expeditions are set out in the appendices.

Leaders are encouraged to undertake a simple risk assessment before embarking on a trip or visit or undertaking a camp or holiday. A form for this purpose is available from Regional Headquarters. Risk assessments need not be complex but should be comprehensive. Frequent visits to local venues such as a swimming pool may not need a risk assessment every time. However, it is essential not to become complacent. An assessment of the risks of such visits should be made at regular intervals.

The person undertaking the risk assessment should consider the following factors when considering the risks:

- the type of visit, holiday or activity and the level to which it is being undertaken;
- the location, routes and mode of transport;
- the competence, experience and qualifications of leaders;
- the ratios of leaders to members;
- the age of the members, competence, fitness and temperament and the suitability of the activity;
- any special or medical needs of the members;
- the quality and suitability of available equipment;

- seasonal conditions, weather and timing;
- emergency procedures;
- the need to monitor the risks throughout the visit, holiday or activity i.e. generic and site specific hazards and variable hazards e.g. environmental, participants personal abilities etc.

Wherever possible, the Leader-in-Charge should undertake an exploratory visit in order to:

- ensure at first hand that the venue is suitable for the visit, holiday or activity;
- assess potential areas of risk;
- ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the members and Leaders in the group;
- become familiar with the area before taking a group of children and young people there.

### **High Risk Activities**

High risk activities can be described as “those activities where a considerable degree of training is required both in the specific skill involved, and in the safety precautions necessary to reduce to an acceptable level the danger to life and limb”. Inherent in this description is an awareness of the safety implications. All those common sense precautions covered in the preceding sections concerning indoor and outdoor events remain necessary basic considerations for any high-risk activity. Particular attention needs to be given to knowledge of the children and young people to be involved, age appropriateness and physical capabilities for the type and level of activity, health records, sense of discipline and order, parental/carer permission, planning and procedures in the event of an accident/emergency. In addition there are extra special considerations that require to be addressed, dependent upon the nature of the specific high risk activity planned. Please consult Regional Headquarters when planning high risk activities.

Under no circumstances should high risk activities be undertaken until the full range of specific training required for the activity has been properly completed, fully assessed, and where required, certified.

### **Physical Education**

As this is a fundamental part of Company programmes it is worth highlighting some obvious safety precautions which should be taken by leaders:

- A risk assessment should be carried out prior to the start of any activity and should be held on file. Where the activity takes place at a new location such as a local sports hall, a new risk assessment is required.
- Where possible, leaders should hold a recognised National Governing Body coaching certificate in the activity taking place, or have attended an equivalent course for leaders in youth organisations.
- Children and young people should not take part in contact sports against different age groups where there is wide disparity in physical size. It is recommended that separate competitions involving contact sports (e.g. football, rugby, etc.) be held for Company section members aged under 15 and those aged between 15 and 18 years of age. These age limits should be taken as their ages during the BB session. Children and young people who stay within the Company until the session in which they reach their 19th birthday should not take part in contact sports competitions with those younger than themselves.
- Wherever possible, appropriate kit should be worn, and children and young people should be advised of requirements in advance. It may be necessary to stop a child or young person or leader from taking part in an activity, if they are not properly equipped.
- Children and young people participating in physical activities should not be allowed to eat or chew or to wear jewellery.
- Children and young people and leaders should be warmed up thoroughly before strenuous activity.
- In contact games and sports, adults should not participate as active team members.
- When apparatus is being used it must be placed with suitable clear space around it, and be stable and firm. Numbers using a given piece of equipment must be carefully regulated, and a proper sequence of use and supervision over the whole area of activity must be maintained throughout. Suitable landing areas must be in place for children and young people and leaders falling to, or travelling across, the floor.
- Danger is minimised when the teaching of an activity follows a carefully structured programme. Leaders must be aware of the need for progression as a child or young person learns a new activity and, where appropriate, a record of each child/young person's individual progress should be maintained, to which other leaders can refer.
- Particular care must be taken by leaders to satisfy themselves about the safety of their children and young people when involving them in activities and competitions not under the auspices of the BB, for example, sports tournaments and visits to games halls, water leisure complexes, industrial and manufacturing sites or community centres.

### **Appropriate Physical Contact**

Certain BB activities require physical contact with children and young people, particularly physical education activities. However, it is vital that leaders should only engage in physical contact with children and young people in ways that are appropriate to their agreed role and responsibilities. Physical contact is based on the needs of the children and young people and the activity being undertaken.

Any form of physical punishment of children and young people is unlawful, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless in exceptional circumstances where it is by way of restraint.

When physical contact is required, the leader should seek to explain the nature and reason for the physical contact to the child or young person. Unless the situation is an emergency, the leaders should ask the child or young person for permission.

Contact should not involve touching genital areas, buttocks, breasts, or any other part of the body that might cause a child or young person distress or embarrassment.

Any physical contact should always take place in an open or public environment and not take place in secret or out of sight of others and should take account of cultural or religious differences and should always be sensitive to issues of gender.

In the case of a child or young person with a disability specific support or assistance may be required. When children with disabilities are lifted or manually supported, the individual child or young person should be treated with dignity and respect. Relevant health and safety guidelines, policies and procedures and training and a bespoke risk assessment/safety plan for the child or young person must be implemented and followed to ensure the safety of the child and those assisting.

There may be occasions where a distressed child or young person needs comfort and reassurance. Leaders should consider the way in which they offer this and do so in an age appropriate way. In doing so, leaders should not assume that all children and young people seek physical contact if they are distressed. Such physical contact should not be initiated by leaders, but leaders can respond where a child or young person initiates appropriate physical contact when distressed.

Leaders should ensure that unnecessary or unjustified physical contact does not become normalised or part of the culture of BB activities, particularly with the same child or young person over a period of time.

Children and young people should be encouraged to voice concerns they may have if any physical contact makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened.

### **Trips and Holidays**

Many BB companies bring their children and young people on day and overnight trips as part of their planned programme of activities. In order to stay safe the following should be considered when planning:

Have the children and young people

- been involved as much as possible in the planning of the trip, agreed a behaviour contract with consequences, agreed boundaries around unstructured time, and been given information on appropriate clothing and contact details for leaders.

Have parents/guardians

- consented in writing to their child or young person participating in the activity, given contact details, medical details including allergies, illnesses, medications and dietary requirements of children and young people, been given contact details of leaders, been given details for pick up and drop off of children and young people.

Have the leaders

- carried out a risk assessment as part of the planning process.
- Decided on who has overall responsibility for the trip
- Ensured there is adequate and gender based supervision
- Appointed a contact person at home who has access to all information and contact details.



- Checked the BB insurance has coverage for all activities planned
- Checked the transport being used has appropriate insurance, qualified drivers, seatbelts etc
- Carried out an equipment safety check and checked the first aid kit.
- Ensured there is a plan B in case of emergencies etc.
- Made provision for returning home early and allocated a budget and contingency fund.
- Reviewed the venue's child safeguarding statement and policy and procedures, insurance cover and suitability for the age and ability of children and young people visiting.

If staying overnight, have the leaders considered the following:

- If there is access to venue staff 24/7.
- Is there appropriate sleeping arrangements for children and young people i.e. separate provision for boys and girls (if both genders participating) and separate provision for leaders (within ear shot of children and young people)
- Venue's supervision and security
- Drugs and alcohol policy of venue.

#### Regulations and Qualified leaders

Camps, holidays and expeditions make an important and valuable contribution to the programme of many companies and the provision of these is to be encouraged. The BB has regulations and training requirements in place for leaders leading these activities. The regulations covering camps, holidays and expeditions are set out in the appendices.

A leader leading a camp or holiday for any age group (of any duration involving at least one overnight) must hold a valid Holiday Leadership qualification. The leader is responsible for seeing that all BB Regulations are complied with.

For canvas camps, at least one leader attending the canvas camp must hold a valid Camp Craft qualification. At all camps and holidays, suitable arrangements must be made for first aid provision and supervision of water and adventure activities.

All camps and holidays involving at least one overnight, and for any age group, must be notified to Regional Headquarters. The leader-in-charge of the camp or holiday should ensure that all the necessary regulations and qualifications are met.

All adults assisting overnight with residential visits, camps or holidays and undertaking some responsibility at the event must be properly registered with Headquarters. Some forethought should be given to ensure that all those attending who help with the catering, the running of activities, provide first aid cover etc. are registered as leaders.

These training and notification requirements will help ensure that due account is taken of the welfare and safety of children and young people, that these activities are led by leaders with appropriate qualifications and that the overall standard of camps, holidays and expedition work within the BB is maintained and improved. BB leaders should not run a camp or holiday for BB members in the name of their local church in an attempt to get round any BB regulations and requirements for the event.

#### Anchors

Anchors are **not** permitted to attend overnight events.

#### Juniors

Juniors may attend organised Junior Section weekend camps under canvas provided that the programme is suitable for the different age groups. Holidays in a school or church hall etc. are also encouraged. Junior Section members, in their last year, are permitted to attend a Company Section camp.

#### Visits outside the Republic of Ireland and United Kingdom

Where Company, Battalion, District or other Brigade parties intend to visit countries outside of the Republic of Ireland and United Kingdom, notification must be sent, in every case to Regional Headquarters at least three months before the date of the visit, and their approval obtained

In planning a trip abroad, consideration (in addition to the general considerations for planning a trip/holiday above) should be given to checking that:

- Children and young people have been provided a 'help me' card in case they become separated from the group;
- an information session has been had with parents to fully inform them about the trip;
- leaders have all the appropriate paperwork in place e.g. passports and visas and that copies of these are with leaders both on the trip and at home
- a detailed itinerary has been prepared and shared with parents/guardians
- leaders, children and young people, parents/guardians have contact details for leaders locally and at home
- leaders have checked and made children and young people aware of currency, climate, time zones, cultural differences and legal differences
- those travelling have any necessary vaccinations
- leaders have scheduled regular check in and debriefing sessions with leaders and children and young people for throughout and after the trip.

#### **Accidents/Incidents**

Where an accident happens at a BB event it is obviously important that certain controlled actions take place. Each Company should have an agreed procedure for dealing with such emergencies and it should be firmly adhered to. The Company procedure should be regularly reviewed and updated where necessary.

Each Company should keep an accident/incident book(s) which are kept with the Company or each sections first aid kit. It may be appropriate for each section to have its own book.

First concern in any accident/emergency must be for the child or young person. If necessary, appropriate First Aid assistance must be administered. Providing that the event is being properly supervised by a trained adult, then this should prove to be no problem. Any child, young person or leader who receives First Aid treatment should have this recorded in the accident/incident book (which is the ultimate responsibility of the Captain) kept with the First Aid box. This record book should require details of time, date, nature of accident, immediate treatment rendered, notes on any later doctor/hospital treatment necessary and, if applicable, how, by whom and when parents/carers were first informed.

Where an accident occurs during the course of a BB event, parents/guardians should be informed at the first reasonable opportunity, and the circumstances of the accident, and a synopsis of the treatment rendered, be given to them verbally.

If the accident occurs at a location distant to home, then careful thought must be given to the seriousness of the accident, as compared to the distance from home, and a judgement made as to whether or not the parents/guardians should be informed immediately. If the child or young person is on a lengthy residential stay with the Company and the nature of the accident, whilst serious, does not involve their returning home immediately, then leaders should make every effort to contact the parents/guardians promptly to inform them of the incident. Whatever the circumstances, when the child or young person returns home, the parents/guardians must be met promptly, and given details of the incident, treatment rendered, and any professional advice given as to their aftercare.

Details of all accidents requiring professional medical attention or hospital treatment at the time or as a result of an accident sustained whilst participating in a BB Activity should be completed on the Accident Notification Form and sent to Regional Headquarters immediately for the Brigade Insurers using the Brigade accident report form, which is available from Regional Headquarters. Where necessary, Regional Headquarters will inform the owner of the premises where the accident occurred.

## Transportation

It is not recommended that leaders give lifts in their cars to individual children or young people, especially on long journeys. This view has been taken as our knowledge has grown of how those who want to harm children or young people has developed. Best practice is clearly to avoid transporting a child or young person alone, but circumstances may arise where it is necessary to do so.

If all alternatives have been exhausted and a leader has to transport a child or young person, there are a number of safety measures that should be put in place to minimise the risk. It is recommended that:

- The child/young person and the parent/guardian are informed and consent the transport arrangements. Parents/guardians should be informed of the person who will be transporting their child/young person, the reasons why and how long the journey will take.
- If possible, a person other than the planned driver should talk to the child/young person about transport arrangements to make sure they are comfortable about the plans.
- If possible, the driver should try to have more than one child/young person in the car, to avoid being in a one-to-one situation with the child/young person.
- The person who leaves children or young people home should be alternated as this would reduce the risk of any one individual from always being alone with a child/young person.
- The driver should have a point of contact for the parents/guardians of the child/young person should they be delayed or break down.
- In instances of late collections, leaders should have access to contact numbers for parents/guardians, and also be provided with an alternate contact number. Parents/guardians should also have a contact number for the group to contact them to inform them if running late.
- Children and young people should wear seatbelts and any legal child restraints.
- The driver must ensure that they have the necessary insurance to carry others.

### Use of Private Cars

Where private cars are used to transport members to and from BB events the third-party insurance of the car owner applies. There can be no claim on the Brigade's insurance policy. All children must travel in a child seat, booster seat or booster cushion appropriate to their age, height or weight. Rule of thumb: if there's a safety belt, you must use it.

Leaders who are provided with company cars by their employer must check with their employer that their insurance allows the driver to use the company car for BB purposes.

### Use of Public Transport

Wherever use is made of public transport particular pre-planning is vital in order that leaders can pre-empt all possible difficulties. Good supervision ratios are critical and an adult should be at the front and rear of the party. Leaders should not sit entirely separate from the children, especially on buses where there is a tendency for all adults to reserve front or rear seats. Particular care needs to be taken over any emergency doors/windows and the proximity of children to these. A sense of order must prevail throughout the journey with care taken as a coach or train arrives at, or departs from, its stopping point.

Leaders must remember, as on all outdoor activities with groups of children, that regular 'head-counts' are a must!

### Use of Hired Transport

Where a minibus or coach is being hired for Company use then a reputable company with roadworthy vehicles and efficient and vetted drivers should be engaged; It is imperative that each passenger on the coach always occupies a separate seat and seat belts are worn throughout the journey.

When hiring a minibus or coach, it is the responsibility of the leader to verify the legality and insurance cover of the operator prior to the use of the transport and request confirmation that the driver has been Garda Vetted.

## **Technology**

Taking photographs of activities, using websites to publicise The Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association and its activities, contacting parents and guardians about activities, the use of social media networks, virtual meeting spaces, in addition to the videoing of displays have become normal activities within the Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association. The guidelines contained in the Technology Policy do not seek in any way to eliminate or curtail these activities but propose certain safeguards so as to ensure that they are used in a responsible manner and so as to minimise the risk or threats to children and young people and leaders when utilising social and digital media.

## **Children and Young People with Special Needs**

The BB encourages children and young people of all abilities to become members of the Organisation. In order to facilitate a safe environment for children and young people with special needs, there are a number of considerations to take into account:

- Children and young people with special needs or disability may depend on adults more than other children and young people for their care and safety so sensitivity and clear communication are particularly important.
- The Company Captain or Leader in Charge of a section should consult with parents/guardians and the child or young person to understand and respond to any particular need they may have.
- Where it is necessary to carry out tasks of a personal nature for a child or young person with additional needs, the Company Captain or Leader in Charge of a Section should consult with parents/guardians and the child/young person to find out the best way to facilitate the child/young person's needs in terms of these tasks. A risk assessment needs to be completed so that the additional needs of the child/young person are met in an appropriate manner. If necessary, the parent may be asked to attend the activity with their child or young person to meet their intimate or personal care needs. Consent should be sought for any agreed intimate or personal care practices by the leader assisting each time.
- The views of the child or young person should be actively sought, wherever possible, when drawing up arrangements.
- In carrying out such personal care tasks, sensitivity must be shown by the leader to the child or young person and tasks should be undertaken with discretion
- Male/female children and young people may prefer to be accompanied by male/female leaders in toilets/bathrooms/changing rooms and this preference should not be overlooked and should be respected where safe and practical. Whilst leaders may accompany children and young people to the toilets/bathrooms/changing rooms, the leader should not enter the cubicle with the child or young person
- Any care task of a personal nature which a child or young person can do for themselves should not be undertaken by a leader.
- In a situation where any variation from agreed procedure is necessary, the Company Captain or Correspondent and parents/guardians should be informed as soon as possible and it should be recorded appropriately.

## **Recognising Child Protection and Welfare Concerns**

It is important that all leaders in Boys' Brigade are aware of the ways in which children can be harmed and have knowledge about the types of abuse and how they may be recognised.

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Abuse and neglect can occur within the family, in the community or in an institutional setting. The abuser may be someone known to the child or a stranger, and can be an adult or another child. In a situation where abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, it should be considered child welfare and protection issue for both children and child protection procedures should be followed for both the victim and the alleged abuser.

The important factor in deciding whether the behaviour is abuse or neglect is the impact of that behaviour on the child rather than the intention of the parent/carer.

The definitions and sign of abuse outlined in the Appendices are not legal definitions. They are intended to describe ways in which a child might experience abuse and how this abuse may be recognised.

In dealing with children, employees and leaders need to be alert to the possibility that a child welfare or protection concern may arise in relation to children you come in contact with. A child needs to have someone they can trust in order to feel able to disclose abuse they may be experiencing. They need to know that they will be believed and will get the help they need. Without these things, they may be vulnerable to continuing abuse.

Some children may be more vulnerable to abuse than others. Also, there may be particular times or circumstances when a child may be more vulnerable to abuse in their lives. In particular, children with disabilities, children with communication difficulties, children in care or living away from home, or children with a parent or parents with problems in their own lives may be more susceptible to harm.

The following are some of the complicating factors and circumstances which may make children more vulnerable to harm:

- Age of the child
- Domestic and sexual violence
- Parental mental health problems
- Parental substance misuse
- Parental intellectual disability
- Children with disabilities
- Unknown male partners and their history/association with the family
- Families who are 'uncooperative' or 'hard to engage'
- Poverty and social exclusion.

It is important to remember that identifying additional vulnerability does not mean that any specific child in those circumstances or settings is being abused.

Abuse is not always committed through personal contact with a child, sometimes it is perpetrated through social media or the use of information and communication technology.

### **Reasonable Grounds for Concern**

The reporting procedures set out on page 22 should always be used when an employee or leader has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected. If what may be symptoms of abuse are ignored it could result in ongoing harm to the child. It is not necessary to prove that abuse has occurred to report a concern, all that is required is that there are reasonable grounds for concern. It is the statutory authority's role to assess concerns that are reported to them to establish the level of risk of harm to a child.

Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern include:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused.

The guiding principles on reporting child abuse or neglect may be summarised as follows:

1. The safety and well-being of the child must take priority over concerns about adults against whom an allegation may be made
2. Reports of concern should be made without delay to the Regional Safeguarding Panel.

### **Responding to child protection and welfare concerns**

BB leaders should deal with any concerns/allegations/suspicions of abuse from a child sensitively and carefully. A child may disclose to an employee or leader that they have been or are being harmed or abused. Children will often have different ways of communicating that they are being abused. If a child hints at or tells a leader or employee that he or she is being harmed by someone, be it a parent/carer, another adult or by a child (peer abuse), it should be treated in a sensitive way.

Remember, a child may disclose abuse to a leader or employee as a trusted adult at any time during their work with them. It is important that leaders and employees are aware and prepared for this and the following approach is suggested as best practice for dealing with any concern/allegation/suspicions and must be reported to the Regional Safeguarding Panel.

#### **Do not conduct an investigation**

- React calmly
- Listen carefully and attentively
- Take the child seriously
- Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you
- Do not promise to keep anything secret
- Ask questions for clarification only
- Do not ask leading questions
- Check back with the child that what you have heard is correct and understood
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser
- Ensure that the child understands the procedures that will follow
- Make a written record of the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible in the child's own words
- Treat the information confidentially, discuss the matter only with people who really need to know

The above guidance will be highlighted in BB Safeguarding training module.

Any further disclosure should be treated as a first disclosure and responded to as indicated above. Where necessary, immediate action should be taken to ensure the child's safety by making a written record of the further disclosure and report to the Regional Safeguarding Panel.

The Regional Safeguarding Panel shall provide any necessary supports to the leader or employee and company, where a report of a disclosure has been made to the Regional Safeguarding Panel, to assist all those involved to deal with the aftermath of making a report of a disclosure.

## **Reporting Procedures**

A child will sometimes confide in a leader or employee that they have been abused or someone may witness incidents which suggest that a child is being harmed. Often it is a case of a leader or employee feeling worried and concerned about certain signs they are picking up on, such as poor hygiene; a child always appearing hungry, listless and tired; a lack of suitable clothing; or unexplained physical injuries. Other indicators may be related to the child's behaviour such as being aggressive, impulsive, or withdrawn. A cluster or pattern of signs is more likely to be indicative of abuse or neglect.

If a leader or employee has any of the above concerns or has seen or heard anything else which causes them concern about a child, they have a responsibility to safeguard children and report those concerns by contacting a member of the Regional Safeguarding Panel and completing the Internal Reporting Form giving as much detail as possible about the concern. The Internal Reporting Form should be returned as soon as possible to the Regional Safeguarding Panel. It is important to note the report should be factual and include all details available to the leader or employee in relation to the child and their concerns. The Regional Safeguarding Panel can be contacted either via Regional HQ during office hours or via the Chair of the panel outside office hours.

The Regional Safeguarding Panel shall provide any necessary supports to the leader or employee and company, where a report of a concern or disclosure has been made to the Regional Safeguarding Panel, to assist all those involved in dealing with the aftermath of making a report of a concern or disclosure.

On receipt of any concern the Regional Safeguarding Panel, in consultation with the leader or employee who raised the concern, will expediently assess the information and decide if reasonable grounds for concern exist. The Regional Safeguarding Panel, as mandated persons, also has the responsibility to assess the information, in line with the Mandated Reporting Threshold Decision Process and decide whether the concern reaches or exceeds the threshold for harm to necessitate a mandated report. The concern raised must be assessed by the Regional Safeguarding Panel in relation to both levels of report, if the concern does not meet the threshold for harm but does meet the reasonable grounds for concern it should be reported. The Regional Safeguarding Panel will make a record of their decision as to whether a report should be made and at what level and the basis for such decision.

A designated member of the Regional Safeguarding Panel should contact the parents/guardians and speak to them about the concern that has been raised in relation to their child and inform them that a report is being submitted to Tusla. This should be done in a sensitive and caring manner and should be done in line with the best practice guidelines contained in Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice. However the Regional Safeguarding Panel will not inform the parents of the decision to report a concern to Tusla, if they feel that by doing so might further endanger the child, impair Tusla's ability to carry out a risk assessment or put themselves or the leader or the employee at risk of harm.

If reasonable grounds for concern exist the Regional Safeguarding Panel will, without delay, contact the Duty Social Worker at Tusla and make a verbal report and complete a Child Protection and Welfare Report form via the Tusla portal based on information held by BB on the child in question and the information provided by the leader/employee on the Internal Reporting Form and forward same to Tusla. If concern meets or exceeds the threshold for harm, the Regional Safeguarding Panel will indicate on the Child Protection and Welfare Report form that this is a mandated report.

If the Regional Safeguarding Panel is unsure if the concern meets the reasonable grounds for concern or meets or exceeds the threshold of harm to warrant a mandated report, they should contact the Duty Social Worker at Tusla and seek advice as to whether a report should be made and at what level. Where the Duty Social Worker advises that the concern does not meet the reasonable grounds for concern, the Regional Safeguarding Panel will inform the leader or employee of the advice received and advise the leader or employee to continue to monitor and support the child and if any further concerns arise to inform the Regional Safeguarding Panel. A record of the initial concern will be placed in the Child Safeguarding files of BB by the Regional Safeguarding Panel.

It is important that should future concerns be raised by a leader or employee in relation to the same child, the Regional Safeguarding Panel should assess the information on all records held in the Child Protection file on that child, in addition to the new concern, when deciding whether reasonable grounds for concern are met or the threshold of harm is met or exceeded and a report to Tusla is needed.

If the Regional Safeguarding Panel decides not to report a concern to Tusla, the following steps should be taken:

- The reasons for not reporting should be recorded
- Any action taken as a result of the concern should be recorded
- The leader or employee who raised the concern should be given a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported to Tusla
- The leader or employee should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to Tusla or An Garda Síochána personally.
- The leader or employee who raised the concern should also be reassured that if they do choose to further pursue the matter, they are covered by the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998.

In the event of an emergency, where it is considered that the child is in imminent danger, or the non-availability of a duty social worker, the Regional Safeguarding Panel should report to An Garda Síochána. The Regional Safeguarding Panel are available to receive reports of concerns or disclosures from leaders at all times and can be contacted via the chair of the panel outside of office hours.

Following a report being made to the statutory authorities, the Regional Safeguarding Panel should inform the Brigade Headquarters that a report has been made.

The Regional Safeguarding Panel should also consider if the concern should also be reported to An Garda Síochána in line with the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 and where necessary advise and support the originator of the concern to meet their obligations under this legislation.

### **Mandated Reporting and Assisting**

In BB some members of the Regional Safeguarding Panel are mandated persons and as such is required under the Children First Act 2015 to report any concern that meets or exceeds the threshold for reporting under the legislation. Where the Regional Safeguarding Panel has a concern that meets or exceeds the threshold for reporting under the legislation they shall make a joint report to Tusla indicating that it is a mandated report when completing the Child Protection and Welfare Report form on the Tusla portal. Where the Regional Safeguarding Panel has a concern that they believe does not reach the threshold for a mandated report, they should consider whether the concern meets reasonable grounds for concern and if it meets the reasonable grounds for concern, a designated member of the Regional Safeguarding Panel shall report to Tusla.

Under the Children First Act 2015 there is also a statutory requirement for mandated persons to assist Tusla in the assessment of risk of mandated reports, where requested to do so. Where such a request is received, the mandated person must provide such assistance as is required. Tusla accepts the time limitations and pressures on other professionals and will use mandated assisting only when necessary and only to the extent needed by each specific case.

Whilst a number of leaders within BB would be mandated persons in their professional capacity, the legal obligation to report under the Children First Act 2015 only applies to information that they acquire in the course of their professional work or employment and does not apply to information they acquire outside of their professional capacity or information given to them on the basis of the personal relationship. The only exception to this are members of the Garda Síochána and members of the clergy as they are mandated both within their professional and their personal capacities. Other leaders who are mandated persons in their professional capacity are not mandated persons in their capacity as leaders within BB.



### **Anonymity**

Designated Liaison Persons cannot report anonymously. Similarly, mandated persons may not report anonymously as to do so does not discharge the statutory obligations for a mandated person under the Children First Act 2015.

Tusla will respect the wishes of non-professionals reporting concerns in good faith who ask to remain anonymous as much as possible, but cannot give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The Data Protection Acts and Freedom of Information Acts allow the withholding of information in certain circumstances, however, should the information be directly sought within legal proceedings, there is no guarantee it will not be released.

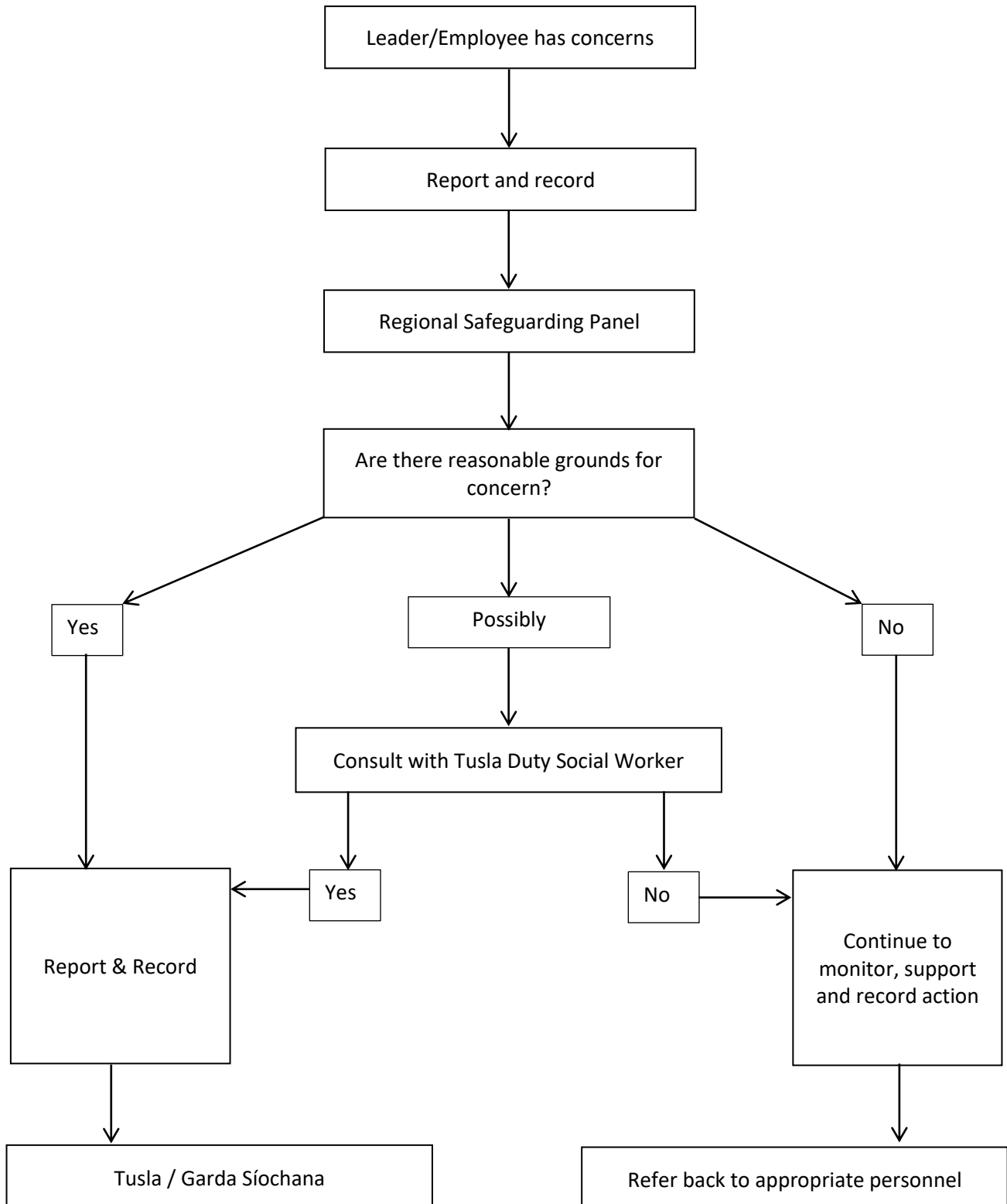
### **Assisting Gardai**

On receipt of an official written request for disclosure of information from the Gardai under Section 41(b) of the Data Protection Act 2018 to allow them to prevent, detect, investigate or prosecute criminal offences, the Regional Safeguarding Panel shall provide, where possible, data in relation to the child, leader or company detailed in the official request.

The Regional Safeguarding Panel shall check all records in Regional HQ and Brigade HQ for information on the child, leader or company for the period detailed in the official request. The information from the records shall be provided to the Gardai as soon as is practicable after the receipt of the official request.

The official request and details of information provided shall be retained on the Child Safeguarding files.

## Reporting Procedures



## Dealing with Allegations

### **Allegation against a leader or employee**

An allegation of abuse may relate to a leader or employee who works with children in BB who has:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence in relation to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they may pose a risk to a child
- Behaved in a way that is contrary to BB's Code of Conduct for leader and employees.

If an allegation is made against a leader or employee, BB has a dual responsibility in relation to the child and the leader/employee. There are two separate procedures to be followed:

- The reporting procedure to Tusla in respect of the child and the alleged abuser;
- The internal personnel procedure for dealing with the leader/employee.

On receipt of an allegation against a leader or employee, the Regional Safeguarding Panel shall follow the reporting procedures laid out on page 19 and if making a formal report to Tusla advise them that the report is in relation to a leader or employee in the organisation. This will allow Tusla to apply the necessary policies and procedures in relation to allegations against workers or volunteers in organisations. In addition, they shall advise the Management Committee that an allegation has been made against a leader or employee and the Management Committee shall undertake the internal personnel procedure.

The first priority is to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk and whilst the BB has a dual responsibility both to the leader and the child in this situation, the safety of all the children in the company has to be the paramount consideration where such a situation arises. The Management Committee should as a matter of urgency take any necessary protective measures (e.g. working under supervision, placing a leader on administrative duties only, suspension of leader). These measures should be proportionate to the level of risk and should not unreasonably penalise the leader or employee financially or otherwise, unless necessary to protect children. Where protective measures penalise the leader or employee, it is important that early consideration be given to the case.

Any action taken should be guided by agreed procedures, the applicable employment contract and the rules of natural justice and the rights of the leader against whom the allegation has been made to a fair procedure in relation to the allegation and investigation.

The Management Committee should privately inform the leader or employee of the following:

- (i) the fact that an allegation has been made against him or her;
- (ii) the nature of the allegation.

The leader or employee should be afforded an opportunity to respond. The Management Committee should note the response and pass on this information if making a formal report to Tusla. The leader or employee should be offered the option of have representation at this stage and should be informed that any response may be shared with Tusla.

The Management Committee should take care to ensure that actions taken by them do not undermine or frustrate any investigations/ assessments conducted by Tusla or An Garda Síochána. To this end it is strongly recommended that the Management Committee maintain a close liaison with the statutory authorities to ensure this.

The requirements of fair procedure and natural justice mean that Tusla usually will not share the details of any assessment regarding allegations of abuse against a leader or employee until the leader or employee has had the opportunity to fully respond to the allegation and any findings and decisions of Tusla.

The Management Committee should advise the Brigade Headquarters of any protective measures which have been taken in relation to a leader against whom an allegation has been made.

The Regional Safeguarding Panel and the Management Committee should be notified of the outcome of an investigation and/or assessment by Tusla. This will assist them in reaching a decision about the action to be taken in the longer term concerning the leader or employee.

#### **Allegation against a child**

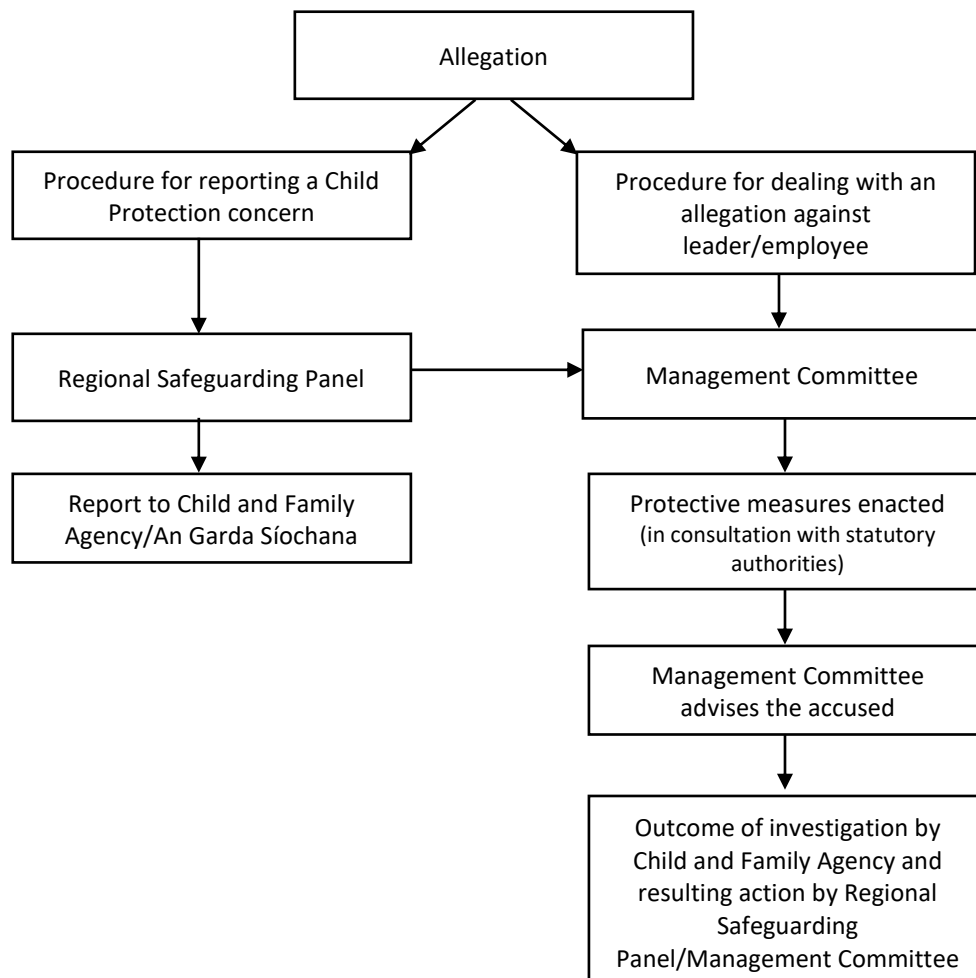
In a situation where child abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the standard reporting procedures (see page 19) will be followed. If an allegation, suspicion or concern of peer abuse is made against a child and meets the reasonable grounds for concern, this should be reported by the Regional Safeguarding Panel indicating that it is a case of suspected peer abuse so that Tusla can put procedures in place for both the victim and the alleged abuser, as it would be considered a child protection and welfare issue for both children.

The Regional Safeguarding Panel shall work with the company to ensure that where both children are members of the company that any necessary protective actions and proportionate measures are put in place both the child(ren) pending assessment and investigation of the allegation. Protective actions may include a safety plan or attendance agreement being put in place for the particular children involved in the situation.

If the allegation meets or exceeds the threshold of harm, the Regional Safeguarding Panel should indicate on the report to Tusla that the report is a mandated report.

The Regional Safeguarding Panel shall provide any necessary supports to the leader or employee and company, where a report of an allegation has been made to the Regional Safeguarding Panel, to assist all those involved in dealing with the aftermath of making a report of an allegation. The Regional Safeguarding Panel shall also provide advice to the company as to support measures that should be put in place for the child who is the alleged victim.

#### **Reporting procedure when dealing with an allegation against a leader/employee**



## **Dealing with disclosure by an adult of childhood abuse**

There are an increasing number of adults disclosing abuse that took place during their childhood. Where such a disclosure is made it is essential to establish whether there may be current risk to any child who may be in contact with the alleged abuser revealed in the disclosure. This is important even where the children about whom there may be a concern are still to be identified.

Some adults disclosing abuse may not choose to personally come forward to report their concerns about children who may be currently at risk.

If any risk is deemed to exist to a child who may be in contact with an alleged abuser, the Regional Safeguarding Panel should be informed and they should follow the reporting procedures laid out on page 19 and report the allegation to Tusla without delay. The Retrospective Abuse Report Form on the Tusla portal should be used to make such a report to Tusla rather than the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form.

If a leader or mandated person is unsure about whether to report or not, they should contact the Regional Safeguarding Panel who can consult with the Tusla Duty Social Worker in relation to the concern and seek advice as to whether a report should be made or not.

Reports by adults of childhood abuse will be assessed by Tusla. If there are on-going child protection concerns Tusla will take necessary actions to ensure any child may be at risk of harm is protected.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Designated Liaison Person**

The Regional Safeguarding Panel shall act as the Designated Liaison Persons for the BB.

The Regional Safeguarding Panel shall undertake the following child safeguarding responsibilities:

- Be fully familiar with Boys' Brigade in the Republic of Ireland's duties in relation to the safeguarding of children
- Have a good knowledge of Boys' Brigade in the Republic of Ireland's guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures.
- Ensure that the Child Safeguarding Policy is up to date and compliant with all legal requirements and state guidance.
- Ensure that the organisation's risk assessment is undertaken every two years in line with the Children First Act 2015 and the Child Safeguarding Statement is updated every two years, adopted by the Management Committee, and circulated to all companies.
- Advise the Management Committee and leaders on best practice.
- Organise and facilitate training for all leaders on Child Safeguarding in conjunction with the Training Director.
- Keep up to date on current child protection and safeguarding developments regarding provision, practice, support services, legal obligations/requirements and policy and attend relevant meetings and undertake training, as necessary.
- Oversee the recruitment process and bring names of new leaders who have completed the recruitment process satisfactorily to the Management Committee for ratification.
- Maintain personnel records for all leaders in the Boys' Brigade in the Republic of Ireland.
- Undertake a risk assessment of any information received on a vetting disclosure to ascertain the suitability of the individual for appointment as a leader in the Boys' Brigade in the Republic of Ireland.

The Regional Safeguarding Panel (as Designated Liaison Person) shall undertake the following child protection responsibilities:

- Ensure that Boys' Brigade in the Republic of Ireland's reporting procedure is strictly followed so that child protection and welfare concerns are promptly referred to Tusla.

- Receive child protection and welfare concerns from leaders, parents or other persons and consider if reasonable grounds for reporting to Tusla exist.
- Consult informally with a Tusla Duty Social Worker where necessary.
- Where appropriate, make a formal report of a child protection or welfare concern to Tusla on behalf of Boys' Brigade in the Republic of Ireland, using the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form in line with the procedures as laid out in the Boys' Brigade Child Safeguarding Policy (RI).
- Inform the child's parents/guardians that a report is to be submitted to Tusla or An Garda Síochana, unless
  - Informing the parents/guardians is likely to endanger the child.
  - Informing the parents/guardians may place you as the reporter at risk of harm from the family.
  - The family's knowledge of the report could impair Tusla's ability to carry out an assessment.
- Record all concerns or allegations of child abuse brought to the Panel's attention as well as any action/inaction taken in response to these concerns.
- Provide feedback to the referrer, as appropriate in line with procedures as laid out in the Boys' Brigade Child Safeguarding Policy (RI).
- Advise the Management Committee on individual cases within the limits of confidentiality.
- Advise the Management Committee of any allegations received against staff or volunteers in line with procedures as laid out in the Boys' Brigade Child Safeguarding Policy (RI).
- Ensure that a secure system is in place to manage confidential records.
- Act as a liaison with Tusla and An Garda Síochana, as appropriate.
- Notify Boys' Brigade UK, for insurance purposes only, in line with the decision of the Regional Safeguarding Panel and within the limits of confidentiality that a formal report has been made to statutory bodies.

The Regional Safeguarding Panel:

Name	Email Address	Mobile Number	Landline Number
CHAIR Olive Good	<a href="mailto:olivecgood@gmail.com">olivecgood@gmail.com</a>	087 245 1310	01 812 9398
Philip Daley	<a href="mailto:philip@philipdaley.ie">philip@philipdaley.ie</a>	087 205 7320	
Debbie Moore	<a href="mailto:debbie.moore@boys-brigade.org.uk">debbie.moore@boys-brigade.org.uk</a>	0044 7989 025654	0044 1442 509534

### **Mandated Persons**

In compliance with the Children First Act 2015, the Regional Administrator of the BB shall maintain a list of all mandated persons within the organisation who have a statutory obligation to report concerns which meet or exceed a particular threshold to Tusla and to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports, where requested to do so. The Regional Administrator will update this list every quarter.

Some members of Regional Safeguarding Panel are mandated persons and shall make a mandated report to Tusla of any child protection or welfare concerns which meet or exceed the thresholds set out in Children First and cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports, where requested to do so.

### **Relevant Person**

The Management Committee has appointed Olive Good as the relevant person for BB and is the first point of contact in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement.

### **Dealing with the press**

Where there is an approach by either the local or national press on the subject of child protection, the Captain/leaders should refer the enquirer to Regional Headquarters. Where a press release has been issued, the Captain and Minister will be sent a copy.

### **Record Keeping, Access and Storage of Information**

#### **Recording and sharing information**

In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, it is extremely important to record the details of an allegation or reported incident, regardless of whether or not a referral is subsequently made to a statutory agency.

In relation to written reports, there are a number of good practice guidelines to be considered. Written reports should:

- Be factual, consistent and accurate.
- Be contemporaneous or written as soon as possible after an event has occurred.
- Where handwritten – write legibly and in such a manner that the text cannot be erased. Do not use correction fluid.
- Where electronic – ensure that the records are not made on a personal device and are stored securely and appropriately.
- Be accurately dated, timed and signed, with the name/signature clearly identifiable.
- Any additional correspondence generated/received in relation to a child protection/safeguarding situation should be stored securely alongside the report.
- Any reports/completed forms should be stored in a safe and secure location – physical or electronic.

#### **Child Safeguarding Records**

The Regional Safeguarding Panel is responsible for keeping the following records relating to the BB Child Safeguarding Policy in a locked fire-proof safe including:

- Any disclosures, concerns or allegations of child abuse;
- Records relating to disclosures, concerns or allegations of abuse including reports from leaders, reports to Tusla, including informal advice from Tusla, informing parents/guardians, reports to Gardaí, advice given to leaders;
- Any requests for information from Gardai in relation to investigating criminal offences;
- Any complaints about the safety and welfare of children while under the supervision of the BB;
- Any protective measures or action taken by Management Committee in relation to an allegation against an employee/leader;
- Any actions taken by the Management Committee in response to a complaint against a leader.

The Regional Safeguarding Panel are the only personnel who have access to these records through the Regional Administrator and Olive Good. Leaders may request, in writing, to view the records held by the Regional Safeguarding Panel relating to them.

All Child Safeguarding records will be held by the BB in line with the retention periods outlined in the BB Data Protection Policy.

#### **Personnel Records**

Personnel records for all leaders include Leader's Registration Form, Volunteer Reference Forms, training record, Garda Vetting and Declaration of Acceptance.

All personnel records will be held by the BB in line with the retention periods outlined in the BB Data Protection Policy

### **Company Records**

Each Company should hold:

- Joining form for each member within the Company;
- Annual Information form for each member within the company which is completed by parents/guardians on an annual basis;
- Attendance records for each meeting of the Company which includes both members and leaders;
- Parental consent forms for any outings or trips away;
- An accident/incident book or forms for any accidents/incidents which may occur in the Company;

All company record will be held in line with the retention periods outlined in the BB Data Protection Policy.

### **Headquarter Records**

The Regional Headquarters will receive event parental consent forms for all events held at a District and National level. All Headquarter records will be held in line with the retention periods outlined in the BB Data Protection Policy.

## **Confidentiality**

Youth work involves the development of trusting relationships where it may be common for children and young people to divulge personal information. Therefore, all leaders need to be aware that a child, young person or a colleague may disclose that they are being abused or know of someone who is being abused.

Confidentiality is about managing sensitive information in a manner that is respectful, professional and purposeful. All information provided to the BB by a child, young person or leader must be treated in a confidential manner. All leaders have a responsibility to handle all sensitive information in line with the BB code of confidentiality.

### **Code of Confidentiality**

All information regarding a child protection or welfare concern must be only shared on a 'need to know basis' and always in the best interests of the child's general welfare and safety. The subject should never be discussed with other persons in the organisation, including leaders or children or young people if they are not directly involved.

In the case of a Child Protection concern, no leader should promise to tell a person they can keep a secret to any person disclosing the information. It must be made clear to the person(s) making the disclosure that secrets cannot be kept but that the information will only be shared with the appropriate person who will handle the information sensitively.

Sharing information with an appropriate/designated person for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality. Codes of confidentiality do not intend to prevent the exchange of information between individuals who have a responsibility to protect children.

Personal information, which is gathered for a specific purpose, should never be used for any other purpose without consulting the person who provided that information.

All leaders working with children and young people must have some training on understanding of the importance of confidentiality and the limitations of confidentiality in relation to Child Protection issues.

### **Exchange of Information**

All leaders should be aware that ensuring Child Protection is only possible in the organisation if all leaders share relevant information. Also to ensure Child Protection, the organisation must work in partnership with the Child and Family Agency and the Gardaí.



Any person who receives information from colleagues about possible or actual Child Abuse must treat it as having been given in confidence and follow the organisation's reporting procedures.

It is also necessary that any records of incidents, disclosures, or concerns of a Child Protection nature are only accessible to those who should have access to the records because of a need to know.

In line with the reporting procedures outlined on section 9, parents/guardians will be kept informed if personal information is being shared or a report is being made to the Child and Family Agency or the Gardaí.

Reports that are made to the Regional Safeguarding Panel can still be followed up on after being shared with the statutory agencies. However, it should be noted that not giving the name of the person making the report can make it more difficult to assess a situation.

The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.

## **Communications**

The BB acknowledges that good communication is essential to maintaining a positive working and learning environment. All information about communications methods and practices utilised by the BB to communicate with parents/guardians, children and young people and the wider community are detailed in our Communications Policy.

## **Working in Partnership with Parents/Guardians**

Working in partnership with parents/ guardians helps to safeguard children and young people. The BB sees the welfare of children and young people as paramount and therefore seeks to form positive relationships between leaders and parents to encourage mutual trust and support and so has developed a policy for working in partnership with parents/guardians.

## **Interagency Working**

The BB Child Safeguarding Policy covers all the BB activities at Company, District and Regional level within or outside the Republic of Ireland.

It is important to ensure that where BB activities are taking place in conjunction with another group or organisation protocols are put in place to ensure that there is clarity for all those involved in relation to Health & Safety, safety practices, codes of behaviour, reporting procedures etc..

Where BB Companies, Districts or the BB are using or hiring premises for weekly meetings, competitions or other activities, they should comply with any requirements such as providing a copy of insurance and Child Safeguarding Policy. The child protection policy of any premises will not supersede the BB Child Safeguarding Policy.

Where BB Companies are using church premises for weekly meetings or other activities, the Company should complete the common protocol form for the parish on an annual basis and provide them with a copy of the insurance for the year, a copy of the BB Child Safeguarding Policy and details of the leaders in the Company, where requested. If a report is being made under the BB Child Safeguarding Policy, the parish will be informed of the report but not the substance of the report.

Where a BB Company or District is working with another organisation or agency on a joint activity, it should be agreed at the planning stages which organisation's/agency's insurance is going to be used to cover the event and which organisation's/agency's child protection policy and procedures will be

followed. Headquarters should be advised of the event and as to what insurance cover and child protection policy and procedures will be utilised at the event.

Where the BB is working with another organisation or agency on a joint activity at national level, the Training Committee or Activities Committee should agree with the other organisation/agency at the planning stages which organisation's/agency's insurance is going to be used to cover the event and which organisation's/agency's child protection policy and procedures will be followed.

## Appendices

### Relevant Legislation

There are a number of key pieces of legislation that relate to child welfare and protection. The information here gives a brief overview of relevant legislation.

#### CHILD CARE ACT 1991

This is a key piece of legislation which regulates child care policy in Ireland. Under this Act, Tusla has a statutory responsibility to promote the welfare of children who are not receiving adequate care and protection. If it is found that a child is not receiving adequate care and protection, Tusla has a duty to take appropriate action to promote the welfare of the child. This may include supporting families in need of assistance in providing care and protection to their children. The Child Care Act also sets out the statutory framework for taking children into care, if necessary.

#### PROTECTION FOR PERSONS REPORTING CHILD ABUSE ACT 1998

This Act protects you if you make a report of suspected child abuse to designated officers of Tusla, the Health Service Executive (HSE) or to members of the Gardai as long as the report is made in good faith and is not malicious. Designated officers also include persons authorised by the Chief Executive Officer of Tusla to receive and acknowledge reports of mandated concerns about a child from mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015.

This legal protection means that even if you report a case of suspected child abuse and it proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that you had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report. If you make a report in good faith and in the child's best interests, you may also be protected under common law by the defence of qualified privilege.

You can find the full list of persons in Tusla and the HSE who are designated officers under the 1998 Act, on the website of each agency ([www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie) and [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)).

#### CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT 2006

Section 176 of this Act created an offence of reckless endangerment of children. This offence may be committed by a person who had authority or control over a child or abuser who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by:

1. Causing or permitting the child to be placed or left in a situation that creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse; or
2. Failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation.

#### CRIMINAL JUSTICE (WITHHOLDING OF INFORMATION ON OFFENCES AGAINST CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS) ACT 2012

Under this Act, it is a criminal offence to withhold information about a serious offence, including sexual offence, against a person under 18 years or a vulnerable person. The offence arises where a person knows or believes that a specified offence has been committed against a child or vulnerable person and he or she has information which would help arrest, prosecute or convict another person for that offence, but fails without reasonable excuse to disclose that information, as soon as it is practicable to do so, to a member of An Garda Síochána.

The provisions of the Withholding legislation are in addition to any reporting requirements under the Children First Act 2015.

#### NATIONAL VETTING BUREAU (CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS) ACTS 2012-2016

Under these Acts, it is compulsory for employers to obtain vetting disclosures in relation to anyone who is carrying out relevant work with children or vulnerable adults. The Acts create offences and penalties for persons who fail to comply with their provisions. Statutory obligations on employers in relation to Garda vetting requirements for persons working with children and vulnerable adults are set out in the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016.

#### CHILDREN FIRST ACT 2015

The Children First Act 2015 is an important addition to the child welfare and protection system as it will help to ensure that child protection concerns are brought to the attention of Tusla without delay.

The Act provides for mandatory reporting of child welfare and protection concerns by key professionals; comprehensive risk assessment and planning for a strong organisational culture of safeguarding in all services provided to children; provision for a register of non-compliance; and the statutory underpinning of the existing Children First Interdepartmental Implementation Group which promotes and oversees cross-sectoral implementation and compliance with Children First.

#### CRIMINAL LAW (SEXUAL OFFENCES) ACT 2017

This Act addresses the sexual exploitation of children and targets those who engage in this criminal activity. It creates offences relating to the obtaining or providing of children for the purposes of sexual exploitation. It also creates offences of the types of activity which may occur during the early stages of the predatory process prior to the actual exploitation of a child, for example, using modern technology to prey on children and making arrangements to meet with a child where the intention is to sexually exploit the child. The Act also recognises the existence of underage, consensual peer relationships where any sexual activity falls within the strictly defined age limits and the relationship is not intimidatory or exploitative.

#### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT 2018

This act amends and consolidates the law on domestic violence and is one of the most significant law statutes in the last 20 years. DVA orders will now be available to more applicants. There is a new list of facts and circumstances to be taken into account by the Court when making a decision re DVA orders.

There are some new Criminal Provisions include Coercive Control Offences (Section 39) and Force Marriage offence (section 38) – note also that under S.45(1)(e), the old provision allowed for marriages to take place where at least one party was under 18, is now repealed.

#### COCO'S LAW 2021

This Act creates two new offences which criminalise the non-consensual distribution of intimate images.

It is an offence to take, distribute or publish intimate images of a person without consent even if there is no specific intent to cause harm. Penalties include a maximum fine of €5,000 and/or 12 months' imprisonment.

It is an offence to distribute or publish intimate images of a person, without consent and with intent to cause harm. Penalties include an unlimited fine and/or 7 years imprisonment.

Importantly, this applies even if the person initially gave consent for the picture to be taken, but they were later shared with other people without their consent.

This law is in addition to existing legislation which makes it illegal to send, receive or share any sexually explicit images, video or text of someone under 18 years of age. A child under 17 years can only be charged with an offence under this particular Act with the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

## Definitions and Signs of Abuse

### NEGLECT

Child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. Ongoing chronic neglect is recognised as being extremely harmful to the development and well-being of the child and may have serious long-term negative consequences.

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of a n omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties. The extent of the damage to the child's health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include the extent, if any, of positive influences in the child's life as well as the age of the child and the frequency and consistency of neglect.

Neglect is associated with poverty but not necessarily caused by it. It is strongly linked to parental substance misuse, domestic violence, and parental mental illness and disability.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. This may become apparent where you see the child over a period of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child once.

The following are feature of child neglect:

- Children left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions - unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Inattention to basic hygiene
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age.
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Abandonment or desertion

### EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationships between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:

- Rejection
- Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment

- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. Fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. Frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviour or actions
- Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. Locking child in bedroom)
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development

There may be no physical signs of emotional abuse unless it occurs with another type of abuse. A child may show signs of emotional abuse through their actions or emotions in several ways. These include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk taking and aggressive behaviour.

It should be noted that no one indicator is conclusive evidence of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is more likely to impact negatively on a child where it is persistent over time and where there is a lack of other protective factors.

#### PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health or development is, or may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

The Children First Act 2015 includes a provision that abolishes the common law defence of reasonable chastisement in court proceedings. This defence could previously be invoked by a parent or other person in authority who physically disciplined a child. The change in the legislation now means that in prosecutions relating to assault or physical cruelty, a person who administers such punishment to a child cannot rely on the defence of reasonable chastisement in the legal proceedings. The result of this is that the protections in law relating to assault now apply to a child in the same way as they do to an adult.

#### SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and in some instances occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members.

Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or his or her siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms.

It should be remembered that sexual activity involving a child may be sexual abuse even if the child concerned does not themselves recognise it as abusive.

Examples of sexual abuse include the following:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:
  - Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography [for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purposes of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means]
  - Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act
  - Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse
- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person

An Garda Síochána will deal with any criminal aspects of a sexual abuse case under the relevant criminal justice legislation. The prosecution of a sexual offence against a child will be considered within the wider objective of child welfare and protection. The safety of the child is paramount and at no stage should a child's safety be compromised because of concern for the integrity of a criminal investigation.

In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that in criminal law the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. Any sexual relationship where one or both parties are under the age of 17 is illegal. However, it may not be regarded as child sexual abuse.

#### Welfare

The Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook defines a child welfare concern as "a problem experienced directly by a child, or the family of a child, that is seen to impact negatively on the child's health, development and welfare, and that warrants assessment and support, but may not require a child protection response".

## National Contacts for Tusla Social Workers

Area	Address	Telephone No.
<b>DUBLIN NORTH</b>	Child and Family Agency, 180 – 189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, County Dublin	(01) 8708000
<b>DUBLIN NORTH CITY</b>	Child and Family Agency, Health Centre, Wellmount Park, Finglas, Dublin 11	(01) 8567704
<b>DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL</b>	Child and Family Agency, Bridge House, Cherry Orchard Hospital, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10	(01) 7955749
<b>DUBLIN SOUTH EAST</b>	Child and Family Agency, Unit 9 Nutgrove Retail Park, Churchtown, Dublin 14	(01) 9213400
<b>DUBLIN SOUTH WEST</b>	Child and Family Agency, Building 2 Vista Primary Care Centre, Ballymore Road, Naas, County Kildare	(045) 839300
<b>CARLOW</b>	Child and Family Agency, Yellow House, Wester Road, Clonmel, County Tipperary	(052) 6177302
<b>CAVAN</b>	Child and Family Agency, Support Services Building, Rooskey, Monaghan	(047) 30475
<b>WEST CAVAN</b>	Child and Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack Street, Sligo	(071) 9155133
<b>CLARE</b>	Child and Family Agency, Unit 3, St Camillus Hospital, Shelbourne Road, Limerick	(061) 588688
<b>CORK</b>	Child and Family Agency, Block 36, St Finbarr's Campus, Douglas Road, Cork, Co. Cork	(021) 4923493
<b>DONEGAL</b>	Child and Family Agency, Ground Level, Scally Place, Justice Walsh Road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal	(074) 9123672
<b>GALWAY</b>	Child and Family Agency, 25 Newcastle Road, Galway, Co. Galway	(091) 546235
<b>KERRY</b>	Child and Family Agency, Rathass, Tralee, Co. Kerry	(066) 7184501
<b>KILDARE</b>	Child and Family Agency, Building 2, Vista Primary Care Centre, Ballymore Road, Naas, Co. Kildare	(045) 839300
<b>KILKENNY</b>	Child and Family Agency, Yellow House, Wester Road, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.	(052) 6177302
<b>LIMERICK</b>	Child and Family Agency, Unit 3, St Camillus Hospital, Shelbourne Road, Co. Limerick	(061) 588688
<b>LAOIS</b>	Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Harbour Road, Mullingar Co. Westmeath	(044) 9353997
<b>LEITRIM</b>	Child and Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack Street, Sligo	(071) 9155133
<b>LONGFORD</b>	Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Harbour Road, Mullingar Co. Westmeath	(044) 9353997



<b>LOUTH</b>	Child and Family Agency, Meath Enterprise Centre, Trim Road, Navan, Co. Meath	(046) 9098560
<b>MAYO</b>	Child and Family Agency, 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor, Mill Lane, Bridge Street, Castlebar, Co. Mayo	(094) 9049137
<b>MEATH</b>	Child and Family Agency, Meath Enterprise Centre, Trim Road, Navan, County Meath	(046) 9098560
<b>MONAGHAN</b>	Child and Family Agency, Support Services Buidling, Rooskey, Monaghan	(049) 4369800
<b>OFFALY</b>	Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Harbour Road, Mullingar Co. Westmeath	(044) 9353997
<b>ROSCOMMON</b>	Child and Family Agency, 25 Newcastle Road, Galway	(091) 546235
<b>SLIGO</b>	Child and Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack Street, Sligo, Co. Sligo	(071) 9155133
<b>NORTH TIPPERARY</b>	Child and Family Agency, Unit 3 St Cammillus Hospital, Shelbourne Road, Limerick	(061) 588688
<b>SOUTH TIPPERARY</b>	Child and Family Agency, Yellow House, Wester Road, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary	(052) 6177302
<b>WATERFORD</b>	Child and Family Agency, Ely house, Ferrybank, Co. Wexford	(053) 9198201
<b>WESTMEATH</b>	Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Harbour Road, Mullingar Co. Westmeath	(044) 9353997
<b>WEXFORD</b>	Child and Family Agency, Ely House, Ferrybank, Co. Wexford	(053) 9198201
<b>WICKLOW</b>	Child and Family Agency, Unit 9, Nutgrove Retail Park, Churchtown, Dublin 14	(01) 9213400
<b>WEST WICKLOW</b>	Child and Family Agency, Building 2, Vista Primary Care Centre, Ballymore Road, Naas, Co. Kildare	(045) 839300

## **Holiday Leadership Regulations**

### **Holiday Leadership Scheme**

The *Holiday Leadership Scheme* comprises a *Holiday Leadership Certificate* and a *Camp Craft Certificate* for canvas events (but not including overnight expeditions, for which a separate Expedition and Outdoor Leadership qualification is required). The person leading the holiday is referred to as the Leader-in-Charge.

### **Requirements to Lead a Holiday**

- a) Anyone leading a camp or holiday of any duration, involving at least one overnight stay, must hold a valid Holiday Leadership Certificate.
- b) The Leader-in-Charge must be a Leader who has completed Youth Leader Training (or Officers' Basic Training), holds a valid Holiday Leadership Certificate and has the approval of the Company Captain to take charge of the holiday.
- c) The Leader-in-Charge has overall responsibility for ensuring that adequate arrangements are made for the safe management of the holiday.
- d) Notification of the holiday must be sent using the forms provided direct to the appropriate Regional Headquarters as follows:
  - one or two nights duration - at least 14 days in advance;
  - more than two nights - at least four full weeks (28 days) in advance.

The Regional Headquarters will ensure that certificates are appropriate and current.

- e) Where Company, Battalion, District or other Brigade parties intend to visit countries outside the Republic of Ireland and United Kingdom, notification must be sent in every case to Regional Headquarters at least three months before the date of the visit for approval.

### **Holiday Leadership Certificate Requirements**

To gain the Holiday Leadership Certificate, the holiday leader must:

- a) Be a Leader who has completed Youth Leader Training (*or Officers' Basic Training*).
- b) Participate in a training event leading to the award of the Holiday Leadership Certificate.

Both of the above requirements must be in place before the leader takes responsibility for leading the holiday.

### **Camp Craft Certificate**

As part of the safe management of the event, the Leader in Charge is responsible for ensuring that at least one person attending the camp holds a current Camp Craft Certificate if it is a canvas camp:

- a) A Leader can hold the Camp Craft Certificate.
- b) A Camp Craft Certificate can be held by non BB personnel, provided that she or he is aged 18 or over and is fully committed to the objectives of the BB and its policies and meets the requirements of our policy on child protection.

### Camp Craft Certificate Requirements

To gain the Camp Craft Certificate, the person concerned must:

- a) Be a Leader or be aged 18 or over, fully committed to the objectives of the BB and its policies and meets the requirements of our policy on child protection.
- b) Participate in a training event leading to the award of a Camp Craft Certificate.

Both of the above requirements must be in place before attending the canvas camp.

### **Duration and Renewal of the Certificates**

Holiday Leadership Certificates last for a period of five years and can be extended by further periods of five years by undertaking appropriate re-training.

The Camp Craft Certificate lasts for a period of five years and will be kept "live" by attending at least one canvas camp within the five-year period and undertaking a responsible role at the camp. Log sheets are available from the appropriate Regional Headquarters for leaders to keep brief details of the canvas camps they have attended. These should be kept by the individual leader in his or her Training Record file. Applications for five-year extensions should be made to the appropriate Regional Headquarters, sending in the completed log sheets.

## **Expedition and Outdoor Leadership Regulations**

### **Requirements to Lead an Expedition**

A leader supervising Expeditions or Explorations must hold an Expedition and Outdoor Leadership Certificate at the appropriate level. Certificates are valid for five years and are subject to renewal.

### **Expedition and Outdoor Leadership Certificate**

The Certificate in Expedition and Outdoor Leadership for all those who train children and young people in Expedition skills, and/or supervise Expeditions, is set at three levels:

- i) Basic: for those who have passed the Theory part of the assessment, allowing them to instruct children and young people and lead accompanied training expeditions in moderate and familiar terrain and in doing so, gain experience.
- ii) Standard: for those leaders training and supervising Expeditions within the Brigade's Award Scheme (i.e., up to the Founder's Badge or Gaisce Silver Award standards).
- iii) Advanced: for those leaders training and supervising Expeditions to Gaisce Gold Award standards (i.e., in wild country).

The BB will recognise externally operated training schemes such as the Basic Expedition Leadership Award (BELA) and Mountain Leader training schemes. Locally provided training is also recognised but the BB retain the responsibility for assessment of locally trained candidates. To obtain a BB Expedition and Outdoor Leadership Certificate, an application should be made to your Regional Headquarters including copies of externally gained certificates.

A valid First Aid Certificate is required prior to the award of any certificate. It is recommended that these certificates are kept updated at the appropriate times.

### **Expeditions Other than on Foot**

To supervise expeditions other than on foot (e.g., by canoe, yacht, cycle, horseback), leaders should hold a certificate of competence issued by an appropriate association or club, in addition to the Brigade's Expedition and Outdoor Leadership Certificate.

### **Duration and Renewal of the Certificates**

The Expedition Certificates last for a period of five years and will be kept "live" by undertaking the equivalent of one expedition per year. Log sheets are available from the appropriate Regional

Headquarters for leaders to keep brief details of their expedition experience. These should be kept by the individual leader in his or her Training Record file. Applications for five-year extensions should be made to the appropriate Regional Headquarters, sending in the completed log sheets.

## **Brigade Insurance**

The Brigade has a comprehensive range of insurances in place including public liability, employer's liability and personal accident cover. The insurances provided via the Brigade cover a wide range of activities; the insurance does not include personal property, money or property owned by BB companies or Battalions for which a separate Unit Scheme is in place. A synopsis of the insurance provided is circulated annually to Company Captains and Battalions Secretaries. The synopsis includes details of the levels of cover provided by the Brigade and the Unit Scheme whereby Companies and Battalions can take out additional insurance to cover personal property, money and equipment.

The Brigade has tried to make the insurance cover as wide as possible in its scope and as automatic as possible within the constraints of reasonable costs. However, Company Captains and those taking responsibility for activities being organised by Battalions and Districts should make sure that attention has been paid to any relevant BB regulations and that all matters relating to safety have been addressed. The safe supervision of activities and any risk assessments that may be deemed appropriate should be undertaken. Our brokers advise us that we should in all circumstances, 'act as if uninsured.' All leaders must ensure that due diligence is given to the safe supervision of all events and activities, and that at all times, proper instruction is given.

In the unfortunate event of an accident, do not accept liability or make any offer or promise of payment. All accidents should be recorded in the accident/incident book. Any accident that requires medical treatment by a doctor, or at a hospital or medical centre should be reported to Regional Headquarters. Reporting forms are available for this purpose.

Where activities are 'bought in' from a specialist provider, i.e. mountain biking, canoeing, archery etc., leaders should make sure that the provider has insurance for Public Liability cover and have sight of their policy certificate, which is usually displayed in their offices or public areas of their premises. If their level of Public Liability cover is less than €3m, Brigade Headquarters should be notified before the activity takes place.

In several recent incidents, leaders and parents/guardians have been asked by activity providers to sign insurance waiver forms in case of any accidents or incidents. Under no circumstances should these waivers be signed.

Any enquiries regarding insurance should be directed to Regional Headquarters in the first instance.

### **Insurance Requirements for Community Service**

The Underwriters of the Brigade Insurance Scheme have informed Headquarters that community service is only covered by the Brigade's insurance where a BB leader supervises the work; this includes community work undertaken for the Founder's Badge or the service element for the Gaisce Award. Where a BB leader does not supervise the work, insurance cover must be provided by the placement agency, i.e. charity shop, residential home, hospital etc. This is usually included in their employer's liability insurance, (which covers both paid and voluntary employment) and their public liability insurance. Most employers have this level of insurance, although some may not be aware of it.

Leaders who are responsible for the community service need to ensure that all the proper arrangements for the safety of BB members are in place before any work takes place. Most placement agencies (charity shops, residential homes, hospitals etc.) will have safe working practices in place for their leaders and volunteers. Safety checklists are included in the record books for The Founder's Badge and Gaisce Award schemes; these should be completed prior to the start of the community service work.

If you are unsure of what might be required or have any queries about these procedures, please contact Regional Headquarters. Additional copies of the checklists and insert pages are also available from Regional Headquarters. These can also be downloaded from the BB web site [www.boys-brigade.org](http://www.boys-brigade.org)



## JOINING FORM (Children & Young People)

This form should be completed for all children and young people joining The Boys' Brigade. The form will assist us in collecting the information we need to ensure parents/guardians are fully informed and that we have all the information needed to ensure children and young people have a safe and enjoyable experience as they participate in BB activities.

The form is designed so that the information is collected in the correct order to help with the inputting of information onto Online Brigade Manager (OBM), The Boys' Brigade's online membership system.

This form should be completed and returned to the Company as soon as possible.

Company Name:\*

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS. Boxes marked with a \* are compulsory.

### Personal Details

Please complete details for the child/young person:

Surname:\*

First Name:\*

Date of Birth:\*

Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Address:\*

Town:\*

County:\*

Eircode:\*

### Medical Details

Doctor/Surgery:\*

Surgery Address:\*

Surgery Phone:\*

Details of any medical conditions, allergies or dietary requirements leaders should be aware of (including any medication needed whilst at BB):\*

### Additional Needs

Please provide details of any particular/additional needs leaders should be aware of:

### Parents/Guardians Contact Details

Please complete details for parents/guardians and an additional emergency contact:

#### Primary Contact 1\* (usually parent/guardian)

Title:\*

First Name:\*

Last Name:\*

Relationship to BB Member:\*

☐ Tick if address is the same as BB Member. If different please complete details below.

Address:\*

Town:\*

County:\*

Eircode:\*

Phone:\*

Mobile:\*

Email:\*

Continued →

### Primary Contact 2 (usually parent/guardian)

Title:  First Name:  Last Name:

Relationship to BB Member:  ☐ Tick if address is the same as BB Member. If different please complete details below.

Address:

Town:  County:  Eircode:

Phone:  Mobile:

Email:

### Emergency Contact\* (an additional contact if primary contacts are not available, which could be a relation or family friend)

Title:  First Name:  Last Name:

Relationship to BB Member:  Phone:  Mobile:

### Photo Consent\*

We sometimes take photos and/or videos during BB activities and need to obtain your consent for this; please tick **ONE** of the options below:

- ☐ I am happy for photographs/videos to be taken of my child during BB activities and used at all levels within The Boys' Brigade for publicity, communications and publications including social media.
- ☐ I am happy for photographs/videos to be taken of my child during BB activities for use by the local Company only, for publicity, communications and publications including social media. Photos/videos will not be used at other levels of The Boys' Brigade.
- ☐ I do not wish any photographs/videos to be taken of my child while they are undertaking BB activities.

We are committed to ensuring that photos and videos are kept securely and that consideration and sensitivity is shown in their appropriate use.

### Signed by Parent/Guardian\*

The parent/guardian is required to read and agree to all the following statements regarding membership of The Boys' Brigade.

- ☐ I give permission for my child to join The Boys' Brigade and to attend and take part in activities organised.
- ☐ I confirm that the information provided is correct to the best of my knowledge and undertake to notify the Leader in Charge of any changes.
- ☐ I understand that The Boys' Brigade requires personal information to ensure the well-being of all children & young people participating in activities as part of their membership.

### Data Protection

All personal information (including sensitive data) is held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Personal data is held securely within Online Brigade Manager (our database system) while your child is an active member of the organisation. If their membership becomes inactive, we'll archive this information in line with our retention policy detailed within our Privacy (Fair Processing) Notice. You have the right to ask for a copy of all data we hold about your child, this is known as a subject access request (SAR). We take data protection very seriously and further information about how we collect, process & retain personal data is provided in our Data Protection Policy and Privacy (Fair Processing) Notice.

Find out more at [boysbrigade.ie](http://boysbrigade.ie) and [boys-brigade.org.uk](http://boys-brigade.org.uk)

Signed:

Name:

Relationship to BB Member:

Date:  /  /

Should you have any questions regarding this form or any other matter please speak to the Company Captain or Leader in Charge.

For more information about The Boys' Brigade and our policies & regulations visit our website at [boysbrigade.ie](http://boysbrigade.ie) and [boys-brigade.org.uk](http://boys-brigade.org.uk)  
The Boys' Brigade is registered as a charity in the Republic of Ireland with the Charities Regulator. Registered Charity Number RCN 20016654.  
Registered address, Unit C1 Nutgrove Office Park, Nutgrove Avenue, Rathfarnham, Dublin D14 V5Y2  
The Boys' Brigade is a Company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales no. 145122. Registered Address: Felden Lodge, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP3 0BL.

### Leader's Use

Form received:  /  /  Updated on OBM:  /  /  Ethnicity prefer not to say: ☐



Member's name in CAPITALS

## ANNUAL INFORMATION FORM

This form is to be completed annually to ensure that we have up to date personal information for all members including medical details and emergency contact information. This form should be completed and returned to the Company as soon as possible.

The form is designed so that the information is collected in the correct order to help with the inputting of information onto Online Brigade Manager (OBM), The Boys' Brigade's online membership system.

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS. Boxes marked with a \* are compulsory.

### Personal Details

Please complete details for the child/young person:

Surname:\*  First Name:\*   
Date of Birth:\*  /  /  Sex:\* ☐ Male ☐ Female  
Address:\*   
Town:\*  County:\*  Eircode:\*

### Medical Details

Doctor/Surgery:\*  Surgery Address:\*   
Surgery Phone:\*

Details of any medical conditions, allergies or dietary requirements leaders should be aware of (including any medication needed whilst at BB):\*

### Additional Needs

Please provide details of any particular/additional needs leaders should be aware of:

### Parents/Guardians Contact Details

Please complete details for parents/guardians and an additional emergency contact:

#### Primary Contact 1\* (usually parent/guardian)

Title:\*  First Name:\*  Last Name:\*   
Relationship to BB Member:\*  ☐ Tick if address is the same as BB Member. If different please complete details below.  
Address:\*   
Town:\*  County:\*  Eircode:\*   
Phone:\*  Mobile:\*   
Email:\*

Continued →



### Primary Contact 2 (usually parent/guardian)

Title:  First Name:  Last Name:   
Relationship to BB Member:  ☐ Tick if address is the same as BB Member. If different please complete details below.  
Address:   
Town:  County:  Eircode:   
Phone:  Mobile:   
Email:

### Emergency Contact\* (an additional contact if primary contacts are not available, which could be a relation or family friend)

Title:  First Name:  Last Name:   
Relationship to BB Member:  Phone:  Mobile:

### Photo Consent\*

We sometimes take photos and/or videos during BB activities and need to obtain your consent for this; please tick **ONE** of the options below:

- ☐ I am happy for photographs/videos to be taken of my child during BB activities and used at all levels within The Boys' Brigade for publicity, communications and publications including social media.
- ☐ I am happy for photographs/videos to be taken of my child during BB activities for use by the local Company only, for publicity, communications and publications including social media. Photos/videos will not be used at other levels of The Boys' Brigade.
- ☐ I do not wish any photographs/videos to be taken of my child while they are undertaking BB activities.

We are committed to ensuring that photos and videos are kept securely and that consideration and sensitivity is shown in their appropriate use.

### Signed by Parent/Guardian\*

I confirm that the information provided is correct to the best of my knowledge and undertake to notify the Leader in Charge of any changes.

#### Data Protection

The Boys' Brigade requires personal information to ensure that we look after the well-being of all children & young people participating in activities as part of their membership. All personal information (including sensitive data) is held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Personal data is held securely within Online Brigade Manager (our database system) while your child is an active member of the organisation. If their membership becomes inactive, we'll archive this information in line with our retention policy detailed within our Privacy (Fair Processing) Notice. You have the right to ask for a copy of all data we hold about your child, this is known as a subject access request (SAR). We take data protection very seriously and further information about how we collect, process & retain personal data is provided in our Data Protection Policy and Privacy (Fair Processing) Notice.

Find out more at [boysbrigade.ie](https://boysbrigade.ie) and [boys-brigade.org.uk](https://boys-brigade.org.uk)

Signed:  Name:   
 Relationship to BB Member:   
Date:  /  /

Should you have any questions regarding this form or any other matter please speak to the Company Captain or Leader in Charge.

For more information about The Boys' Brigade and our policies & regulations visit our website at [boysbrigade.ie](https://boysbrigade.ie) and [boys-brigade.org.uk](https://boys-brigade.org.uk)  
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#### Leader's Use

Form received:  /  /  Updated on OBM:  /  /



## CONSENT FORM

Member's Name in Capitals

**SECTION A** (To be completed by The Boys' Brigade)  
(insert name of District) District: Republic of Ireland Region  
Leader in Charge: \_\_\_\_\_

Leader In charge Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

It is advised that parents/guardians make a note of the above details.

### **SECTION B** (To be completed by the parents/guardians)

Full Name of Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

### **PERMISSION**

I give my permission for \_\_\_\_\_ (child's name) to attend and take part in the \_\_\_\_\_ (activity and date).

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **MEDICAL DETAILS**

Name and Address of Child's Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Details of any medical condition or allergies leaders should be aware of (including and medication needed) whilst at BB)?

Is the child currently taking any medication? ☐ No ☐ Yes (Please provide details below):

Does the child self-medicate? ☐ No ☐ Yes

Please give details of any additional medical/ health information leaders should be aware of (Please provide details below):

### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

Please give details of any particular needs your child has to enable them to participate in BB activities:

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**PARENTS/GUARDIANS CONTACT DETAILS**

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Mobile) \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**ALTERNATIVE CONTACT DETAILS**

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Mobile) \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to you (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

During this event/activity we may take photos and/or videos and need to obtain your consent for this; please tick ONE of the options below:

☐ I am happy for photographs/videos to be taken of my child during BB activities and used at all levels with The Boys' Brigade for publicity, communications and publications including social media.

☐ I do not wish and photographs/videos to be taken of my child while they are undertaking BB activities.

*Please note the photo consent obtained on this form ONLY applies to this particular event/activity and does not impact on photo consent given to the Company through the Annual Information Form or as update by the Parent/Guardian through My.BB.*

*(If individuals indicate they do not wish to appear in any BB publicity that wish will be respected)*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name (In BLOCK CAPITALS): \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to BB Member: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Data Protection**

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**Administration Use:**

Form Received:     /     /



## DECLARATION BY A LEADER OR EMPLOYEE FROM ABROAD

1. ***Whether in your present country of residence or elsewhere, have you ever been investigated in respect of or charged with or convicted of a criminal offence or have you ever been subject to criminal proceedings in which the court has found the charge or charges against you to have been proved but in respect of which the Probation Act (or any foreign equivalent thereof) has been applied, or are you at present subject to any criminal charges or criminal investigation?***

Yes ☐ No ☐

*(If yes give details on separate sheet)*

2. ***Have you ever committed any criminal act or been engaged in any criminal conduct for which you have not been prosecuted, whether in your present country of residence or elsewhere?***

Yes ☐ No ☐

*(If yes give details on separate sheet)*

3. ***Has any court in your present or any other jurisdiction ever found you liable for a civil offence?***

Yes ☐ No ☐

*(If yes give details on separate sheet)*

4. ***Have you been placed on a sex offenders' register in your present or any other jurisdiction?***

Yes ☐ No ☐

*(If yes give details on separate sheet)*

***I the undersigned, who have applied to work as a Leader in The Boys' Brigade & Girls' Association do hereby certify and warrant that in completing this form and in furnishing all the information contained herein or attached hereto, I am doing so in good faith and I further certify and warrant that all such information is true and accurate and constitutes a full disclosure of all material facts known to me.***

Signed .....

Full Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Date .....

When completed and signed, return this form to:

The Boys' Brigade & Girls' Association, Unit C1 Nutgrove Office Park, Nutgrove Avenue,  
Rathfarnham, Dublin 14 D14 V5Y2

### **Data Protection**

All personal information (including sensitive data) is held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Personal data is held securely within Online Brigade Manager (our database system) while you are an active member of the organisation. If your membership becomes inactive, we'll archive this information in line with our retention policy. You have the right to ask for a copy of all data we hold about you, this is known as a subject access request (SAR). WE take data protection very seriously and further information about how we collect, process & retain personal data is provided in our Data Protection Policy.



## DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE

I have attended a training event which has introduced me to The Boys' Brigade & Girls' Association Safeguarding Policy and Procedures to be followed when working with children and young people have been explained to me.

I acknowledge receipt of a copy of The Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and declare I will uphold the same as a leader in The Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association.

I further state that I shall exercise a duty of care for any children and young people in my charge.

Name (*print*).....

Signed .....

Company.....

Date.....

***NB This declaration is to be retained by the Regional Safeguarding Panel***

### **Data Protection**

All personal information (including sensitive data) is held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Personal data is held securely within Online Brigade Manager (our database system) while you are an active member of the organisation. If your membership becomes inactive, we'll archive this information in line with our retention policy. You have the right to ask for a copy of all data we hold about you, this is known as a subject access request (SAR). WE take data protection very seriously and further information about how we collect, process & retain personal data is provided in our Data Protection Policy.



## RISK ASSESSMENT CHECK LIST FOR COMPANY MEETING PLACE

### Getting to your Company Meeting Place

Situation	Observation	Comment
1. Is the entrance well lit?		
2. Are the paths even?		
3. Do people have to cut across a car park		
4. Is there a need to cross a dangerous road to get to the hall?		
5. Do people have to pass dangerous fences (e.g. barbed wire)?		
6. Do people have to go down an alleyway?		
7. Do anti-social groups or individuals gather round or near the entrance?		
8.		
9.		

### The Premises

Situation	Observation	Comment
1. Is there good lighting in all rooms, halls and access routes that your group use?		
2. Do people have to go up or down any stairs that could be slippery?		
3. Are electric sockets protected by safety inserts?		
4. Is the mains electricity cupboard locked or inaccessible to our group?		
5. Are the fire exits totally free from obstruction on both sides?		
6. Do the fire exits open readily?		
7. Are the fire extinguishers present and free from obstruction?		
8. Have they been serviced in the last year and are key staff trained how to use them?		
9. Is there a fire alarm and an evacuation procedure?		
10. If yes, have you practised it with the members and Leaders and when was this last done?		
11. Are chairs and tables, etc. stacked / stored safely?		

12. Can you go into a store room without material falling on you?		
13. Is all other equipment (including that used by others) stored and stacked safely?		
14. Is there access to a loft or other unsuitable space or cupboard?		
15. Can a gas supply be interfered with?		
16. Is there a kitchen that stores sharp tools? Can the cooker be interfered with?		
17. Is the kitchen a suitable, clean, hygienic place for cooking, preparing food or having a tuck shop?		
18. Can your group touch, contact or interfere with the heating source / system?		
19. Are cleaning, gardening and maintenance chemicals readily accessible to your group instead of being locked away?		
20. Are there notices and signs indicating hazardous situations, e.g. electrics, low head room, etc.?		
21. Are there trailing wires and cables etc., which your group could trip over?		
22.		
23.		

### General Arrangements

Situation	Observation	Comment
1. Do leaders/instructors for your Company programme have appropriate qualifications?		
2. What arrangements are there for First Aid treatment?		
3. Do you have and do you complete accident reports?		
4. Do you ensure that no younger children and young people leave the premises unless in the care of an appropriate adult?		
5. Do you have a register of all the children and young people and leaders present at every meeting?		
6. Do you have the consent form details with you at all the meetings?		
7. Are children and young people asked to help move or carry items that could be too heavy for them?		
8. Are you satisfied with the adults to children ratio?		

9. Do you have Company Rules and are they adhered to by all?		
10.		
11.		

Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Premises \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person undertaking the assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_





Leader-in-Charge of event

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name in Capitals

**RISK ASSESSMENT FORM  
FOR VISITS, HOLIDAYS & ACTIVITIES**

**Part A** (To be completed before the event)

Activity:	Venue:
Date:	Time:
Leaders:	Helpers:
Age Group:	Numbers:
Mode of Transport:	First Aid Provision:

Possible Hazards:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Precautions Taken:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are current Brigade Regulations being met?	Yes	No	_____
Have Regional Headquarters been notified of this visit/holiday/activity?	Yes	No	_____
Have Parental/Carers Consent Forms been used for any overnight event?	Yes	No	_____

(Please initial and date when each condition is satisfied)

**Part A (Cont.)**

Additional Possible Hazards:

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Additional Precautions Taken:

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part B (To be completed after the event)**

Review Notes:

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## INTERNAL REPORTING FORM

*To be filled out by leader in the event of an alleged or suspected abusive situation*

Date : \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Reporting: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of child involved: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents/Guardians Name(s)/: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person allegedly causing concern: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the incident or situation, which is causing concern *(continue on blank sheet if necessary)*

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Source of information (i.e. child, adult, injury/distress noticed): *(continue on blank sheet if necessary)*

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Any explanation offered to account for injury / distress etc: \_\_\_\_\_

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Child's own statement (if relevant) *(continue on blank sheet if necessary)*

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

When completed and signed, return this form to: The Boys' Brigade & Girls' Association, Unit C1 Nutgrove Office Park, Nutgrove Avenue, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14 D14 V5Y2